THE

COMIC ROMANCE

OF

MONSIEUR SCARRON,

TRANSLATED BY

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ADDRESS

TO THE

PUBLIC.

THE following tranſlation, (a few ſheets excepted) was executed by the late Doctor Goldſmith. It is unneceſſary to dwell upon the merit of a work, which has the ſtamp of his name to give it currency. It was an undertaking for which, the natural eaſe, and delicacy of his ſtile, united to his exquiſite taſte for humour, peculiarly adapted him. He has preſerved the genuine ſpirit of Scarron unimpaired, and taught him to relate his pleaſantry with grace, in good Engliſh. Mr. Savage and ſome others gave a tranſlation

tranſlation of the ſame author ſome years ago, but whether owing to want of attention, or from adhering too implicitly to the French idiom, it is but a meagre ſubſtitute for the original. It will be neceſſary to acquaint the reader, that the third part of the Comic Romance was not written by Scarron. Before he could enter upon it, death ſnatched the pen from his hand, and it was unfortunately reſumed by one without a ſpark of his taſte or ſpirit. Great liberties have therefore been taken by the tranſlator with this part. As far as his diſcernment aſſiſted him, he has curtailed its redundancies, and expunged the impotent efforts of falſe wit, which frequently gleam through it. Indeed he has retained very little more than ſufficient to maintain the thread of the narrative, ſuppoſing that the plaineſt food dreſſed after the Engliſh faſhion, would be more agreeable to his readers, than a miſerable French ragout, compoſed of nothing but garlick and ſallad.

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THE

THE COMIC ROMANCE.

CHAP. I.

The arrival of a ſtroling company at the town of Mans.

THE ſun had already performed more than half his courſe, and having reached the declivity of the heavens, was haſtening, with his uſual velocity, to his nightly goal: in plain Engliſh, it was betwixt five and ſix of the clock, when a cart drove into the market-place of Mans. It was drawn by two yoke of very ſorry oxen led by a breeding-mare, that had a colt, which ſkipped to and fro around the cart like a fooliſh ſilly animal as it was. On the top of a ſort of pyramid, compoſed of trunks, portmanteaus, and great packs of painted ſcenes, with which the cart was filled, appeared a

damſel, dreſt half city, half country faſhion. By the ſide of the cart walked a young man as poor in cloaths, as rich in mein. He wore a patch on his face, of ſo enormous a ſize, that it quite eclipſed one eye, and half of one cheek; and carried on his ſhoulder a long fowling-piece, which had been the death of crows, jays, and magpies, without number. Theſe ſtrung together ſerved all the purpoſes of a bandileer, at the bottom of which hung by the feet a hen and a gooſe, as a trophy of victory over the plundered enemy. Inſtead of a hat, he wore a night-cap, which, being tyed round his head with garters of different colours, reſembled an imperfect unfiniſhed turban; and I make no doubt that it was originally intended for ſuch. His doublet, a coat of brown frize, was bound with a leather thong, which ſerved to ſupport a rapier, and which, by reaſon of its prodigious length, could not be conveniently or dextrouſly uſed without ſuch a ſupport. His breeches were tucked up to above the middle of his thighs, in the ſame manner as thoſe of our players, when they perſonate ſome ancient hero; and his buſkins, which ſupplied the place of ſhoes, were beſpattered with dirt to the very ancles.

ancles. By his ſide walked an old man in a more decent and regular, though very ordinary, habit. He carried on his ſhoulders a baſs-viol; and as he ſtooped a little in walking, he might have been taken, at a diſtance, for a large tortoiſe walking on its hinder legs. Some grumbling critic may, perhaps, cavil at the compariſon, from the vaſt diſproportion betwixt that animal and a man; but, beſides that I ſpeak here of the large tortoiſes which are found in India, I would have the critics know, that I uſe the ſimile on my own authority. To return from this digreſſion, our ſtroling company (for ſuch it was) had now proceeded as far as the Tennis-court at the ſign of the Stag, before which ſome of the moſt jolly burghers in Mans were then aſſembled. The noiſe of the mob who had gathered round the cart, joined to the novelty of the equipage, ſoon drew upon our ſtrangers the eyes of the honourable aſſembly. After ſurveying them for ſome time with conſiderable attention, an under-ſheriff, la Rappinierre by name, bolder than the reſt, ſtepped forth, and making up to them, demanded, with an air of magiſterial authority, who they were. The young man, whom I deſcribed

above, without offering to pull off his turban (which, indeed, it was impoſſible for him to do, as with one hand he held his gun, and with the other the hilt of his ſword, that it might not beat againſt his legs) anſwered him, that they were Frenchmen by birth, and players by profeſſion; that his ſtage name was Deſtiny, his old comrade's Rancour: and that the gentlewoman, who ſat rooſting like a hen on the top of their baggage, was called Cave. The oddity of the name ſetting ſome of the company a laughing, gave Deſtiny occaſion to obſerve that there was nothing ſo very ſtrange or ridiculous in the name of Cave neither, any more than in thoſe of Pit, Fox, Legge, Pott, or Hill; which, being common names, are repeated an hundred times a day, without exciting any tendency to laughter. He was proceeding in his edifying harangue, when a confuſed noiſe, in which, however, blows and oaths could be diſtinctly heard, drew the attention of the company to the quarter from whence it proceeded. The oxen and mare, it ſeems, being hungry after their long journey, had made free with a truſs of hay which lay before the door: which the ſervant of the tenniscourt obſerving, had amply reſented on

the

the perſon of the poor carter, whom he belaboured moſt unmercifully, without telling him why or wherefore. The company, however, interpoſing, tranquillity was again eſtabliſhed; and the miſtreſs of the tennis-court, who loved a play much better than her devotions, through unheard-of generoſity, in a woman of her profeſſion, bid the carter let his cattle eat their bellies full. The carter, who had no objections to ſuch an offer of kindneſs, embraced it without delay; and, whilſt the beaſts were feeding, the author too reſted a while, and bethought himſelf what to ſay in the next chapter.

CHAP. II.

In which the Reader and la Rappiniere become better acquainted.

KNOW, courteous reader, for to you I addreſs myſelf, that, in different parts of this kingdom is found a numerous ſpecies of animals called wits or drolls. Few towns of any note want one; and as to Paris, it has one for every ward. Know further, that I myſelf might have had that honour conferred upon me

by the ward to which I belong, but I declined it; for I have long ſince renounced this world, and all its fooliſh vanities.—But this by the way. La Rappiniere, who, it ſeems, was the wit or droll of Mans, took the firſt opportunity of renewing the converſation which the late ſquabble had interrupted, by aſking the young ſtroller, whether their company conſiſted only of Miſs Cave, Mr. Rancour, and himſelf? No ſuch matter, rejoin'd Deſtiny. The prince of Orange's, or the duke of Epernon's company, is not more compleat than ours. Why, Sir, we were at Tours, and met with prodigious ſucceſs there, when, as ill-luck would have it, our rattle-pated door-keeper happened to kill one of the fuzileers of the intendant of the province: we were obliged to ſave ourſelves by a ſpeedy retreat, and in the miſerable ludicrous plight you ſee us. Ay, thoſe fuzileers of the intendants have been as troubleſome to you ſtrollers at la Fleſche, ſaid M. la Rappiniere. O! the Murrain ſeize them, exclaimed the miſtreſs of the Tennis-court, with ſome emotion. I warrant you now, we ſhould have no plays, if they could help it. Here Rancour ſtruck in—If they could!—In ſpite of their teeth, had we but the keys

keys of our trunks we might entertain the town for a matter of four or five days before we join the company at Alencon, and ſet the devil and them at defiance. An anſwer ſo well calculated to excite attention in the by-ſtanders could not fail. Whilſt they were loſt in expectation, la Rappiniere, thinking it adviſeable to ſtrike the iron while it was hot, told Rancour, that, as they could not conveniently get at their ſtage cloaths, they muſt make a ſhift to do without them; adding, that, if Miſs Cave would accept of the uſe of an old gown of his wife's, it was heartily at her ſervice. Struck with the generous offer, the good-natured miſtreſs of the Tennis-court (ſo powerful is example) made a like offer to Rancour and Deſtiny of two or three ſuits of cloaths, which had been left with her in pawn: and now preliminaries were on the point of being finally adjuſted, when, to the great ſurprize of all preſent, one of the by-ſtanders, very archly as he thought, obſerved, that they were all this time reckoning without their hoſt; for, continued he, addreſſing himſelf to Rancour, there are but three of you, a number certainly inſufficient for the performance of any play whatever. You happen to be a

little out there, replied Rancour, interrupting him, for I once acted a whole play myſelf——yes, ſir, I perſonated the king, the queen and the ambaſſador. And how do you think I could do this? why, by adapting my voice to the character, that's all; ay, ay, the management of the voice and the tones is the great ſecret. For inſtance, now I made uſe of a falſe treble-tone for the queen, ſpoke through the noſe for the ambaſſador, addreſſing myſelf at the ſame time to the crown which I placed upon a chair; and as for the king, I fairly reſumed my ſeat, my crown, and my gravity, and lowered the key of my voice to a baſs. Now, to convince you of this, gentlemen, turning to the company, do but ſatisfy our carter, defray our expences at the inn, and provide us what cloaths you can conveniently ſpare, and we will engage to act before night; or, if you do not reliſh the propoſal, we muſt beg leave to go to drink, or reſt ourſelves; for we really ſtand in need of refreſhment, having come a great way, and in no ſmall hurry. The ſtroler's propoſal being readily embraced, the devil, or la Rappiniere his agent, whoſe talent for miſchief could brook no longer delay, moved that Rancour and Deſtiny, in order

order to haſten the entertainment, ſhould make uſe of the cloaths of two young men of the town, who were then playing a ſet at the tennis-court; and as for Mrs. Cave, continued he, her ordinary dreſs will anſwer the purpoſe; and the audience, I make no doubt, will be kind enough to make proper allowances for any improprieties in that reſpect. This motion, in which it was impoſſible to diſcern the cloven-foot, was as readily agreed to, and the ſtrolers, after drinking a few glaſſes a-piece, poſſibly to aſſiſt their memory, and inſpire them with courage, retired to dreſs. The audience, in the mean time, becoming numerous, had taken their places in a garret, or upper room; where, after waiting ſome minutes with impatience, a dirty cloth, inſtead of a curtain, was drawn up, which diſcovered Deſtiny with a baſket on his head inſtead of a crown, lying on a quilt, rubbing his eyes, as if newly awoke, and mouthing in the tone of a celebrated actor, the part of Herod, in the tragedy of Mariamne.

Tho' much of the force of Deſtiny's looks was loſt in the huge patch which almoſt covered one half of his face, yet his merit did not paſs unobſerved or un-

applauded. Mrs. Cave performed wonders in the parts of Mariamne and Salome; and Rancour, like another Proteus, went through the remaining characters of the piece, with univerſal applauſe. The play was now drawing to a concluſion, and the moſt perfect harmony ſubſiſted between the audience and the actors, when an adventure happened that quite unhing'd the public tranquility, and had well nigh rendered the cataſtrophe more tragical than either the deſpair of Herod, or the death of Mariamne. What that adventure was, thou, reader, knoweſt not; for how ſhouldſt thou, ſeeing it is much if the author himſelf knows? Suffice it for thee, at preſent, to be aſſured that cuffs, kicks, oaths, and boxes on the ear, make a capital part of it; and, to crown the whole, an indictment and information, taken out by la Rappiniere, the moſt ſkilful of all men in ſuch matters.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Containing a battle, inferior to none in Homer, or Don Quixote,

BEFORE I proceed to the bloody buſineſs of this chapter, the indulgent reader will permit me to ſay a word or two about tennis-courts, which are ſo common in the petty towns of this kingdom. A tennis-court, then, is a place of public reſort for all the bullies, pickpockets, cheats and ſcoundrels in the neighbourhood; the manners are ſuch as might be expected from ſo hopeful and motley a ſociety; and as to converſation it is reſtricted to three topics; ribaldry, blaſphemy, and ſcandal; which are no where to be found in ſuch genuine purity and perfection. 'Twas, if I miſtake not, in a garret or upper room, belonging to one of theſe tennis-courts, that I lately left our three ſtrolers performing the tragedy of Mariamne, with univerſal applauſe, to a crouded and elegant audience, with la Rappiniere, the under-ſheriff, at their head. Hitherto all was well, when, in the midſt of a moſt intereſting ſcene between Herod and Mariamne, who

ſhould enter the room, in their drawers, with each his raquet in his hand, but the two identical young men, with whoſe cloaths Rancour and Deſtiny, at the inſtigation of la Rappiniere, had made ſo free. They had juſt finiſhed their ſet at tennis, and, being impatient to ſee the play, had neglected to get themſelves rubbed. In this pickle then they entered the room, where they were hardly ſeated, till they perceived that Herod and Pherores had their cloaths on. Blaſt you for a uſeleſs ſon of a bitch, exclaimed the moſt paſſionate of the two, addreſſing himſelf to the waiter of the tennis-court, what the devil could make you give my cloaths to that mountebank? The vociferation and furious tone with which this interrogation was accompanied, almoſt petrefied the poor waiter, who knew well enough what a devil of a fellow he had to deal with. Recollecting, however, the danger of delaying to give a peremptory anſwer, he replied with great ſubmiſſion, that indeed he had no hand in it; who then, raſcal? continued the incenſed bully. The poor fellow, not daring to accuſe the author of all this miſchief, before his face, ſtood mute, expecting every moment a ſound drubbing for his delicacy;

delicacy; when his fears were inſtantly diſpelled by the matchleſs impudence of la Rappiniere, who, riſing from his ſeat, cried out, "'twas I; and what have you to ſay to that?" You are a damn'd eternal ſcoundrel, replied the other, and I will break your head for your impudence. So ſaying, he let fall his raquet, which he had ſuſpended for that purpoſe, with prodigious violence, on the head and ſhoulders of the under-ſheriff; who ſtood motionleſs, whether ſtunned with the force of the blow, or ſurpriſed that he, who, in all quarrels, had ever been the aggreſſor, ſhould be out-done at his own weapons, or, perhaps, not inclined to hazard a battle, upon a ſlight provocation, I will not poſitively determine. However, to ſay the truth, I lean towards the laſt opinion; for M. la Rappiniere was one of thoſe prudent men who never ſtrike when the odds are manifeſtly againſt them. But, without enquiring into cauſes, which we can, at beſt, but conjecture, ſo it was that he ſtood motionleſs; and motionleſs he might have continued to this very hour, and thereby deprived the reader of much laughter and entertainment, had not his man, who, at this juncture, happened to be ſomewhat more iraſcible than the maſter,

maſter, ruſhed, with an honeſt indignation, upon the aggreſſor, and, dealing his blows very liberally about him, imprinted viſible marks of his fury on the face, neck, and hands of his unequal antagoniſt. La Rappiniere was by this time recovered from his fit of amazement; and finding himſelf ſo powerfully reinforced, thought it incumbent upon him to reſent the late provocation, which now appeared greater in proportion as the danger grew leſs. In this laudable reſolution, he charged the enemy with indefatigable briſkneſs in the rear; whilſt his man exhibited ſuch ſurpriſing feats of valour in the front. And now victory, which had long remained doubtful, was on the point of declaring itſelf for the allied party, when a ſudden reinforcement, received by the enemy, changed for a moment the face of affairs, and reſtored the ballance which a ſuperiority of numbers had contributed to deſtroy. So much for the ſublime. Now for the familiar. Whilſt la Rappiniere was exerciſing his manhood on the back parts of his proſtrate adverſary, a relation of the latter, highly reſenting the indignity offered to his friend, flew at the ſecure, unguarded under-ſheriff, tore him down, and was ready to ſacrifice him to

his

his juſt indignation, when, lo! ſuch is the fortune of war! his own heels were tripped up, and the deſtruction he meditated for another fell with double vengeance upon himſelf. The action becoming general, the audience divided into parties; each individual eſpouſed one ſide or another; and our two ſtrolers, Rancour, and Deſtiny, having, by this time, joined the company, exhibited as pregnant marks of genius in their real, as formerly in their aſſumed characters. And now nothing but noiſe and confuſion prevailed; ſome ſwore, others ſcolded, all beat and kicked; and, to add to the horror of the ſcene, the miſtreſs of the tennis-court, who ſaw her goods broken to pieces, was ready to pierce the air with her lamentable cries. Our combatants were now in the very heat of action, and ſtools, chairs, and other miſſile weapons, were performing dreadful havoc on both ſides, when, luckily for thoſe who had no deſire to be murdered outright, in came the right honourable the ſeneſchal of Mayne, attended by ſome of the worſhipful magiſtrates of the town of Mans. They had been walking in the piazza of the market-place, when a confuſed noiſe of blows, cries and oaths, which juſt then aſſailed their

their ears, giving them reason to apprehend a breach of the truce, they ran with all speed to the place of action. Among other proposals for restoring the peace, it was moved by some of their honours that two or three pailfulls of water thrown on the combatants would have the desired success; and the opposition between the coldness of the water, and the excessive heat of these turbulent spirits was strongly insisted on; but this remedy, which, to say the truth, bade fair for success, it was not found unnecessary to apply; the warriors at length giving over, not from any inclination for peace, but an utter inability of continuing the war. The total suspension of hostilities which ensued, was owing, in a great measure, to the good offices of two charitable capuchins, who, thrusting themselves between the contending parties, had procured a cessation of arms, till an eclaircissement and mutual accommodation should take place. With whatever seeming reluctance this amiable proposal of the peace-making capuchins was received, I am inclined to believe that our combatants would have been glad an hour before of so decent a pretence of being off; for, in fact, they were heartily tired of one another. The truce thus

established,

eſtabliſhed, a negociation was ſet on foot; which, however, did not hinder informations to be taken on both ſides, previous to a trial in due courſe of law.

And now that the battle is over, it remains to do juſtice to the merit of Deſtiny, one of the ſtrollers, whoſe proweſs and wonderful ſkill in boxing are celebrated at this day in the town and environs of Mans, from the faithful account delivered by the two young men that begun the fray, whom he almoſt cuffed to death; as well as the concurring teſtimonies of many others of the enemy, whom he diſabled with the firſt blow. His patch falling off in the ſcuffle, people remarked that his face was as fine as his ſhape was handſome; mean while, to the horrid din and clamour of war ſucceeded the milder notes of peace; and after ſome time ſpent in repairing the ravages committed on the perſons and cloaths of the combatants, there remained nothing of the late obſtinate engagement, but a ſpiteful grin; which appearing in the faces of both parties, would have of itſelf pointed out to a ſtranger, the actors in that bloody ſcene. It was late before la Rappiniere and the ſtrollers left the inn. In their way to the market-place, as that gallant magiſtrate was diſplaying his

his uſual eloquence on the perilous adventure in which they had been engaged, they found themſelves ſurrounded by ſeven or eight bullies, with ſwords in their hands. The frighted ſheriff was like to drop with fear, and no wonder, for a thruſt aimed at him by one of the villains, was juſt about to take its effect, when the hero Deſtiny generouſly interpoſing, warded off the blow, at the expence of a ſlight wound, which, in ſpite of his agility, he received in the arm. His ardour nothing diminiſhed by a paltry accident, he drew his rapier, and in the twinkling of an eye, beat two ſwords out of the hands of the enemy, broke two or three ſkulls, ſlaſhed as many faces, and, in a word, made ſuch havoc among the gentlemen of the ambuſcade, that, to the immortal honour of this ſtrolling comedian, it was unanimouſly confeſſed, by a numerous crowd of ſpectators, that they never had ſeen ſo valiant a champion.

The reader, whoſe curioſity is ever laudable, will, no doubt, be deſirous to know the cauſe of the bloody intentions of theſe bullies againſt la Rappiniere and his company. The fellow who had begun the late fray in the tennis-court, had given a particular account of the bloody engage-

engagement to his brother-in-law and an apothecary of his friends, upon his return home. In the relation la Rappiniere was not forgot; and as he aſſured them that he was ſtill at the tennis-court, they reſolved to make repriſals, and avenge the manual caſtigation which their friend had received by a ſpecies of ſomewhat more ſevere. For this purpoſe, they had actually hired a ſet of bullies to aſſaſſinate the under-ſheriff; who, in all probability, would have fallen a victim under the hands of theſe deſperate ruffians, had not Deſtiny, by a well-timed diſplay of his valour, rendered their deſign abortive, in the manner we have related.

We return to la Rappiniere, who was ſo ſurpriſed, and ſo pleaſed, with the generous conduct of Deſtiny, that, to ſhew he was not inſenſible to merit, he invited him and his company to paſs ſome days at his houſe; when the carter, having laid down the ſtrolling furniture, returned home to his village.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

La Rappiniere's hoſpitality, and the adventure of the ſhe-goat.

MADAME la Rappiniere, the moſt ſubmiſſive of wives, received the company with a world of politeneſs. This lady, whom I would introduce to the reader's acquaintance, was neither handſome nor ugly; tho' ſo very lean and dry, that ſhe never ſnuffed a candle with her fingers, without their catching fire. I could enlarge for hours upon her good and bad qualities, and relate ſuch ſtories—but I forbear, for fear of being tedious. The firſt compliments were ſcarce over, when the two ladies ſeemed, by mutual conſent, to have baniſhed all ſort of diſtance and reſerve, and accoſted each other with dear madam, my deareſt ſweet Mrs. Cave, and ſuch like familar appellations. The under-ſheriff, who had a moſt intolerable ſhare of vanity, was no ſooner come into the room, than looking around him, with an air of importance, he bid ſomebody go to the kitchen and larder and haſten ſupper. This order he knew it was impoſſible to execute, as there

there was no-body in his houſe beſides his valet-de-chambre, who was likewiſe occaſionally his groom, a young maid, and an old lame woman as crazy as a mangy dog. The truth of the matter was, he generally dined and ſupped in taverns at the expence of every fool and bubble he met with; whilſt ſoup, cabbage, and ſhort commons, were the fare of his wife and orderly family at home. On the preſent occaſion, being willing to provide a ſumptuous entertainment, and well knowing the meagre ſtate of the larder, he was ſlipping behind his back ſome money into the hands of his ſervant, to fetch ſomething for ſupper, when his vanity was doomed to ſuffer a ſevere mortification; for thro' the aukwardneſs either of the maſter or the man, the pence fell on the chair he ſat on, and from thence to the ground. This accident quite diſconcerted the company; the wife bluſhed up to the ears; the ſervant curſed and muttered; miſs Cave was a good deal uneaſy; even la Rappiniere himſelf looked confounded upon it, and ſeemed to wiſh the thing had not happened. Rancour, indeed, did not much mind it; and as for Deſtiny, I could never learn how it affected him. Be that as it may, the money

money was taken up, and a ſupper, good or bad, procured, which came in juſt as Deſtiny was informing the company that he had very good reaſons to diſguiſe himſelf, and particularly for wearing that large patch, which, as we have obſerved before, covered more than one half of his face. The more ſerious and important buſineſs of eating, and afterwards of drinking, which enſued, interrupted a converſation, which, for ought the reader or writer knows, might have been productive of ſome great diſcovery. Certain it is the ſubject did not once recur to Rappiniere that night; for, after having eaten a hearty meal, he applied the glaſs ſo frequently to his own head, that, what with eating and drinking, and telling a number of lies about himſelf, he was fairly knocked up, and carried dead-drunk to bed. Rancour and Mrs. Cave ſupped like famiſhed players. Madame la Rappiniere determined to lay hold of the opportunity, which was ſeldom offered her, and eat ſo very greedily, that ſhe got a ſurfeit; Deſtiny alone ſupped ſoberly, and went ſoberly to bed. He lay in a little room by himſelf, Mrs. Cave in a cloſet with the chamber-maid, and Rancour with the valet-de-chambre, the Lord knows where. I

ſhould

ſhould here caſt a veil over the tranſactions of the night, had it been devoted to ſleep; but, as (notwithſtanding their fatigue, and their late hearty meal, ſo uncertain is every thing here below! they ſlept but little) it becomes me, as a faithful hiſtorian, to communicate all my knowledge to the curious and enquiring reader. After her firſt ſleep, madame la Rappiniere, from what cauſe I know not, had an inclination to do what kings themſelves muſt do without a proxy. In her hurry to get out of bed, ſhe waked her huſband, who, finding himſelf alone, called out for his wife; no-body making anſwer, he grew jealous, fell in a paſſion, and roſe out of his bed, half drunk as he was, in a fury; having groped his way out of the chamber, he heard the ſtamping of feet before him, which increaſing his ſuſpicions, he followed the noiſe through a little gallery that led to Deſtiny's room. He now found himſelf ſo near what he purſued, that he trod upon its heels, and, fully perſuaded that it was his ſpouſe, he was going to lay hold on her, crying out, You whore! But his hands could catch nothing; and his feet at the ſame time giving way, he fell proſtrate on his noſe. He, however, continued the ſtruggle, till,

till, feeling ſomething pointed running into his breaſt, he doubted ſome foul play; and, thinking it high time to alarm the family, he roared out murder in a moſt hideous manner; help! help! I am ſtabbed—barbarouſly murdered——oh! help! The whole houſe was ſoon in an uproar, and every body ran to give aſſiſtance where it ſeemed to be ſo much required. Firſt came the maid with a candle, then Rancour and the valet in their ſhirts; behind them Mrs. Cave in a tattered petticoat; Deſtiny followed cloſe with a ſword in his hand; and, to compleat the group, madame la Rappiniere in her ſmock brought up the rear. They expected to ſee ſome perſon in iminent danger; but judge their ſurprize, when, by the light of the candle, they perceived the furious la Rappiniere grappling with a ſhe-goat, which was kept in the houſe to ſuckle ſome young puppies, whoſe dam happened to die. His wife, who preſently ſuſpected the truth of the matter, aſked him if he was mad: to which emphatical queſtion he anſwered, not without heſitation, that he had taken the goat for a thief. The adventure ended, every one returned to his bed, making

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ing what conſtruction he pleaſed upon the affair; and as for the goat, ſhe was ſhut up again with her puppies.

CHAP. V.

In which another principal hero makes his appearance.

AN hero, ſay the criticks, is, or ought to be, a perfect character. If ſo, how abſurd is the conduct of our modern romance-writers, who aſcribe that perfection to a ſingle hero which they might juſt as eaſily parcel out among a much greater number. For it is evident, by the rule of proportion, that if one hero reflects credit upon any work, half a dozen ſuch heroes will reflect juſt ſix times that credit upon the ſame work. As therefore I ſhould be inexcuſable to adopt that conduct, the abſurdity of which I laboured to expoſe, nothing leſs than a multiplicity of heroes will ſerve my turn; and by this characteriſtic difference ſhall my Comic Romance be diſtinguiſhed from every ſpecies of compoſition, whether romantic, epic, or dramatic, that has yet appeared.

Hitherto Deſtiny has filled the ſcene. It is now time for Rancour to relieve him. This ſtroller, whom we mean to raiſe to the rank of a hero, was one of thoſe diſagreeable mortals, who hate every body, and are not even much pleaſed with themſelves. Peeviſhneſs, caprice, and diſcontent formed the principal outlines of his character. His wit, if he had any, was confined to a few ſmart ſtrokes of repartee, and a tolerable talent in making doggrel rhimes. As for honour and conſcience, he had neither. He was as malicious as an old monkey, and as envious as a famiſhed dog. Before this redoubted hero, all characters, good and bad, were levelled promiſcuouſly; and merit, particularly where it appeared in thoſe of his own profeſſion, was ſure to meet with no quarter. If you named Belleroſe, he was intolerably affected; Mindon, a damned bad voice; Floridor, O! a mere ſpouter.

Theſe affected nothings, would he often exclaim on ſuch occaſions, are entirely ſtrangers to the graces of true action, proper geſture, and juſt articulation. They pretend to expreſs a paſſion, and they tear it to pieces. The reader, from this ſpecimen, might be apt to conclude that

Mr.

Mr. Rancour poſſeſſed no ſmall ſhare of critical knowledge. No concluſion, however, would be more raſh or worſe founded. To ſay the truth, this arch-critic in conceit was no more than a mean vender of ſentiments, picked up at ſecond hand, which he faithfully retailed on every occaſion that offered; his abilities as an actor were of the ſame kind; and, though he never failed to inſinuate that he was the only model of perfection the ſtage could boaſt of, it was well known that he was ſuffered in the company, merely on the foot of old-age and long ſervice. When the ſtage was reduced to Hardy's plays, he acted the parts of nurſes, in a treble tone, and with a maſque; but ſince its reformation, his ſphere of action was enlarged. He now over-looked the door-keeper, and acted the parts of confidants, ambaſſadors, bailiffs, bullies, gentlemen-uſhers, and footmen. Upon theſe vaſt accompliſhments he had built an unſufferable degree of pride; which, joined to his talents for ſlander, and a quarrelſome over-bearing humour, ſupported by a little courage, made him to be dreaded by all his companions, except Deſtiny, with whom he was as tame as a lamb, and as reaſonable as his natural inclination

would ſuffer him. 'Twas once confidently affirmed that a hearty drubbing given him by Deſtiny, had produced this peculiarity in his behaviour; but that report did not gain ground no more than another malicious ſtory, about his having conceived ſo ſtrong a paſſion for other people's goods, as often to make them his own without their knowledge or conſent.

This Rancour, who, upon the whole, was one of the beſt ſort of men in the world, had lain, as the reader will remember, with Doguin, the ſheriff's valet-de-chambre; and whether the bed was none of the beſt, or that Doguin was but an indifferent bed-fellow, ſo it was that poor Rancour could not ſleep a wink all night. At break of day Doguin being called up by his maſter, the ſtroller roſe likewiſe; and paſſing by la Rappiniere's chamber, he ſtepped in to wiſh him good morrow. The latter received his compliments with all the ſtate of a country mayor, and ſcarce deigned to return any of his civilities; whilſt Rancour, to whom ſuch contemptuous uſage was familiar, bore all with a calm and ſtoic indifference. His worſhip was pleaſed, however, at length to deſcend from his dignity to the familiar; and,

and, among a thouſand other queſtions about the ſtage, aſked Rancour, how long Deſtiny had been one of their company? adding, that he was an excellent player. It may be ſo, replied Rancour, but all is not gold that gliſters; when I played the firſt characters, he acted thoſe of pages; yes, ſir, he has been ſent on a meſſage to your humble ſervant, and I have had the honour of kicking him in that capacity many's the time and oft—Now, I appeal to you, how the devil is it poſſible that he ſhould underſtand a trade that he never learned? Is it to be ſuppoſed that players are to come up like muſhrooms, in one night? No, I warrant you. What then is the cauſe of his ſucceſs? Why he is young, he is young; but if your honour knew as much of him as I do, you would be of another gueſs mind, for he is as proud as if he was lineally deſcended from Charlemagne, and yet he won't tell us who he is, nor whence he comes, no more than a handſome Phillis, that accompanies him, under the name of ſiſter, and who, for aught I know, is no better than a—— but no matter for that. You would not think it, perhaps, but I ſaved his life once at Paris at the expence of two great wounds, I received from a

ſword; and he was ſo unthankful for the good office, that, inſtead of providing me with a ſurgeon, he ſpent the whole night in ſearching the dirt for a certain jewel enriched with falſe diamonds, of which, he ſaid, he was robbed, by thoſe that ſet upon us. When, where? interrupted la Rappiniere, with ſome emotion. Upon the twelfth day of —— on the Pontneuf, anſwered Rancour. This reply produced violent effects on the ſheriff and his man Doguin: they became pale and red by turns; and la Rappiniere ſhifted the diſcourſe in ſuch diſorder, that Rancour, who obſerved his confuſion, began to wonder at it. The hangman of the town and ſome archers coming in, interrupted their converſation, to the great ſatisfaction of all parties, particularly of Rancour, who was ſenſible that what he ſaid had touched la Rappiniere in a very tender part; though he could not poſſibly divine what ſhare he might have had in the adventure.

In the mean time Rancour joined Deſtiny, whom he found with miſs Cave, waſting his breath to no purpoſe to make an old taylor confeſs, that he knew no more about his buſineſs than a coach-horſe. The matter in diſpute was this,

Deſtiny

Deſtiny, it ſeems, had found among the playhouſe furniture, two coats, and a tattered pair of breeches much worn out, which he had given to this botcher, to make out of them a more faſhionable ſuit, than the trunk-breeches he had on; but the unaccountable blockhead, inſtead of making one of the coats ſerve to mend the other, and the breeches alſo, as Deſtiny certainly meant he ſhould, had, through an error in judgment, unworthy of his profeſſion, mended both the doublets out of the breeches; ſo that poor Deſtiny, with ſo many coats, and no breeches at all, muſt either keep his chamber, or ſubmit to the mortification of being followed by the children in the ſtreets, and hooted at, upon account of his comical dreſs, as he had been before. From this dilemma, he was, however, ſoon delivered by la Rappiniere, who generouſly preſented him with a ſuit of cloaths, the ſpoils of a highwayman, who, by the vigilance of this worthy magiſtrate, had been apprehended and broke upon the wheel not long before. What, ſaid the hangman, who was preſent, and who, in fact, had left thoſe cloaths in the cuſtody of la Rappiniere's maid, diſpoſe of my property, a perquiſite of my pro-

ſeſſion, and before my face? This remonſtrance, ſtrong as it was, was little attended to; and this officer was forced to pocket the injury, for fear of the under-ſheriff, who threatened to turn him out of his place if he heard a word more about the matter. The ſuit fitted Deſtiny to a hair, who, after giving the taylor one of the botched doublets for his pains, went out with la Rappiniere and Rancour. They all dined at a tavern, at the expence of one of the burghers, who, having buſineſs with la Rappiniere, had brought him hither to tranſact it. Miſs Cave, in the mean time, kept her landlady company; and, like an induſtrious actreſs, employed herſelf in waſhing her ſmocks and dirty night-gowns.

Doguin, the ſheriff's valet, having met two of the young men whom he had ſo ſeverely handled the day before in the tennis-court, was ſent home with one large fracture in his ſkull, three terrible wounds in the ſmall guts, diſlocations in ſix different places, with bruiſes, blows, and contuſions without number. La Rappiniere was ſhocked at the ſight, and ſwore he would have ſatisfaction; Deſtiny adviſed him to find out the murderers, and Rancour, who did not care to ſleep with

with Doguin in his preſent dangerous condition, being heartily tired with ſtrolling about the ſtreets, went to the next inn for a bed; where we ſhall attend him, after having wiſhed la Rappiniere and his company a good night.

CHAP VI.

The adventure of the chamber-pot, the death of Doguin, and other memorable occurrences.

RANCOUR went into the inn, with a hearty meal on his ſtomach, and ſomething more than half drunk: he was introduced by la Rappiniere's maid, who bid the hoſteſs get a bed ready for him. Who have we here? ſaid the hoſteſs; faith, had we no other cuſtomers than ſuch as he, our houſe-rent would be but ill-paid. Peace, huſſy, ſaid the huſband, Mr. la Rappiniere does us too much honour. My compliments to your maſter, child, the gentleman ſhall be provided with a bed. Ay, but where? rejoined the hoſteſs; there was but one left, and a merchant from Lower-Maine beſpoke it not half an hour ſince."

Theſe words were ſcarce out of her mouth, when the merchant came in, who hearing the occaſion of their diſpute, offered Rancour a ſhare of his bed; which the ſtroller, with ſome faint expreſſions of gratitude, accepted. The merchant having called for ſupper, the landlord, as uſual, kept him company; and Rancour, without much entreaty, putting in for a third, began to drink upon a new ſcore. Their converſation turned moſtly upon politics, taxes, and the national debt; they damned monopolies, drank confuſion to exciſemen, ſettled the miniſtry, and unſettled their own brains ſo much, eſpecially the inn-keeper, that forgetting he was at home, he lugged out his purſe and called for the reckoning; when his wife knowing his failing, and perceiving that he was already far gone, pulled him by the ſhoulder, with the aſſiſtance of the maid, into his chamber, and laid him upon the bed with his cloaths on. Rancour being left alone with the merchant, told him that he was troubled with a ſtrangury, and would be very ſorry, if he ſhould incommode him; O! not in the leaſt, replied the merchant, who was of an obliging benevolent diſpoſition: in any event, a night will ſoon be over.

It will be proper to obſerve that the bed was ſo placed as to be cloſe to the wall; Rancour went into it firſt, and the merchant going after him lay at the ſtock which was conſidered as the place of honour. Upon lying down, Rancour aſked his companion for the chamber-pot. What to do? ſaid the merchant. Why to put it by me, to avoid being troubleſome to you, replied Rancour. No trouble in the leaſt, returned the other; I ſhall give it you, whenever you have occaſion for it. To this kind offer Rancour ſeemed unwilling to conſent, proteſting he ſhould be extremely ſorry to trouble him. The merchant fell aſleep without returning any anſwer; and was juſt beginning to enjoy the ſweets of repoſe, when the malicious ſtroller, whoſe love of miſchief would not ſuffer him to reſt, pulled him by the arm, crying, Sir, ſir. What's the matter, ſaid the merchant, haſtily, gaping and ſtretching himſelf. Pray reach me the chamber-pot, quoth Rancour. That I will, ſaid the other: at the ſame time leaning over the bed, he took up the urinal, and gave it to Rancour; who, after ſeeming to uſe all his endeavours, muttering a thouſand oaths to himſelf, and making bitter com-

plaints of his diſtemper, returned it to the merchant, without making a ſingle drop of water. The benevolent trader ſet it on the ground again, and opening his mouth as wide as an oven, Truly, ſir, ſaid he to Rancour, I —— I pitty you, and fell aſleep preſently. The ſtroller ſuffered him to indulge his drowſineſs, till he ſnored as loud as the baſe-pipe of an organ, when waking him a ſecond time, he renewed his complaints, and aſked him for the chamber-pot with as much malice as he had done before. The merchant, pitying his diſtreſs, delivered it into his hands with his uſual kindneſs; when Rancour putting himſelf in a piſſing poſture, cried out ſtill louder than before, and was twice as long endeavouring, in vain, to make water. At length, after ſeeming to uſe his utmoſt efforts to no purpoſe, he deſired the merchant not to give himſelf the trouble to reach the chamber-pot any more, for that he would for the future reach it himſelf. Juſt as you pleaſe, anſwered the honeſt trader, yawning; methinks you have a ſorry time on't, I wiſh you relief with all my heart. I am very much obliged to you, returned the ſtroller, groaning, as if he was in an agony of pain; you had bet-

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ter compoſe yourſelf for reſt. So I ſhall, ſaid the other, who, in fact, would have given half he was worth for a hearty nap; and in a few minutes he was faſt aſleep.

Short-liv'd, however, was his tranquillity, for his malicious companion perceiving by that faithful alarum, his noſe, that the merchant was got into a profound ſleep, he laid his elbow on the pit of his ſtomach, and, ſtretching forth the other arm, as if he would take up ſomething from the ground, cruſhed him down with the whole weight of his body. Zounds, ſir, what do you mean? the unfortunate trader exclaimed in a moſt hideous manner, ſtarting out of his ſleep, you have almoſt ſtifled me. I aſk your pardon, returned Rancour with a tone as ſoft and gentle, as that of the merchant was loud and vehement—I hope you are not hurt —I only meant to take up the chamber-pot——Not hurt! cried the other, I believe I am deſtroyed. Damn it, could not you have aſked me for the pot, I had much rather have given it to you, and not ſleep all the night long, you have ſo cruſhed me. Rancour made no anſwer, but fell a piſſing ſo plentifully, and with ſuch force, that the very noiſe had

had been ſufficient to wake the merchant. In fine, he filled the pot, and then returned Heaven thanks, with a villainous hypocriſy. The merchant, hoping his ſleep would no more be interrupted, wiſhed him joy on his plentiful diſcharge of urine, and was going to compoſe himſelf again for reſt, when Rancour, making as if he would ſet the chamber-pot on the ground, let fall both the pot and its contents on the merchant's face, beard and breaſt, excuſing himſelf with, Dear ſir, I beg your pardon; upon my ſoul it ſlipt out of my hand. The merchant, without returning an anſwer, leap'd out of bed, roaring like a mad man, and calling for a candle, while Rancour, who, ſecretly, enjoyed his diſtreſs, failed not to expreſs the deepeſt concern at what had happened. Mean time the merchant raiſed the whole houſe with his continual roaring; and the landlord, his wife, maids, and ſervants being come to know what the matter was; The matter! quoth he, you have put me to bed with the devil, I think—I have had ſuch a night of it—Come, let me have a fire lighted in another room, for I'll ſtay no longer here. The company begged him to be more particular; but he was in ſuch a paſſion, that,

that, without gratifying their requeſt, he took his cloaths in a fury, and went down to the kitchen to dry himſelf, where he lay all night ſtretched on a bench by the fire ſide.

The innkeeper importuning Rancour to tell him what he knew of the matter, Upon my honour, anſwered the ſtroller, with an air of ingenuity, which he well knew how to aſſume, he has ſurprized me no leſs than he has done you, nor can I for my life divine what cauſe he has to complain. This only I can ſay, that he has diſturbed me in the midſt of the ſoundeſt ſleep I ever enjoyed in my life. He has certainly had ſome ill-dream or other, or is beſide himſelf, for look ye, he has bepiſs'd the bed. As I am a Chriſtian woman and ſo he has, exclaimed the hoſteſs, turning up the quilt; yes, he has wet it through and through. O! the devil take ſuch trumpery, ſay I; but he gets not off ſo—by the maſs I'll make him pay for it. Having ſaid this, ſhe withdrew with the company, after bidding Rancour good-night; who, now that the comedy was finiſhed, compoſed himſelf for reſt; and, in fact, he ſlept ſoundly. However, he was called up earlier than he choſe by la Rappiniere's maid, who came

came running to fetch him to Doguin, who was then juſt dying, and deſired to ſpeak with him before he made his exit. Impatient to know what a dying man, with whom he got acquainted but the day before, might have to ſay to him, Rancour loſt no time in obeying the ſummons. On his arrival he found it was a miſtake of the maid, who hearing the expiring valet call for the player, had taken him for Deſtiny. That ſtroller was juſt then ſhut up in Doguin's chamber, being informed by the prieſt, who confeſſed him, that he had ſomething of great importance to communicate. He had not been there above a quarter of an hour, when the under-ſheriff came home, having gone abroad at day-break upon buſineſs. Being told that his man, whoſe loſs of blood rendered his wounds incurable, had deſired to ſee the player Deſtiny before he died—"And has he ſeen him?" aſked la Rappiniere in great diſorder. Anſwer was made they were actually locked in together at that time; at which information he was in a manner thunder-ſtruck; and running in a great fright knocked at Doguin's chamber-door, juſt as Deſtiny was opening it to call for help, the ſick man being taken with

with a fainting fit. The ſheriff, in great confuſion, aſked him what his ſervant had to ſay to him. I think he is light-headed, replied Deſtiny coldly, he has aſked me pardon a thouſand and a thouſand times; and I cannot tell that he ever offended me. However, let ſomebody look after him, for he cannot live long. Upon this they made towards the bed, and that very inſtant Doguin gave up the ghoſt—an event at which the ſympathizing ſheriff ſeem'd rather pleaſed than concerned. Thoſe who were acquainted with him judged the reaſon of his unconcern to be, becauſe he owed him his wages; but Deſtiny alone knew beſt of any what he ought to think of it. In the mean time two more of the ſtrolling company arrived at la Rappiniere's houſe, and were immediately recognized by Deſtiny. But leſt the reader ſhould be ſurfeited with ſuch a variety of diſhes, we defer giving any farther account of theſe new-comers till the next chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The adventure of the Litters.

DESTINY's ſervant, the youngeſt of the two ſtrollers, who came to la Rappiniere's, informed his maſter that the reſt of the company were all arrived, except Stella, who had ſtrained her foot three leagues off Mans. But how came you hither? Who told you we were here? ſaid Deſtiny. The plague, which now rages at Alençon, anſwered the other ſtroller, whoſe name was Olive, obliged us to make for Bonneſtable; and ſome inhabitants of this town, whom we met by the way, informed us you acted here—We were likewiſe told that here had been the devil and all to do—that you had fought, and was mortally wounded; poor Stella has been much grieved on your account, and deſires you to ſend her a litter. The keeper of the next inn, who was come at the report of Doguin's death, ſaid he had a litter at home, and if they would pay him his demand, it ſhould be ready to go by noon. This propoſal was received with pleaſure, the litter was hired for a crown, and chambers were

were taken in the inn for the whole company. About noon, the ſtrolling caravan ſet out for Bonneſtable, la Rappiniere having ſtayed behind to procure a licence for acting from the deputy governor. The day being ſultry, Rancour ſlept in the litter, Olive was mounted on the hinder horſe, and the inn-keeper's man on the other before; Deſtiny, who trudged it on foot, with a gun on his ſhoulder, was entertained by his man, during the journey, with a narrative of what had befallen the company from the caſtle at Loire, to a village near Bonneſtable, where Stella had ſtrained her foot, as ſhe lighted off her horſe. In the midſt of this entertaining converſation, two men well mounted, and who hid their faces with their cloaks, as they paſſed by Deſtiny, rode up to the litter, on the ſide where it was uncovered, and finding in it but one man aſleep, I verily believe, ſaid he that was mounted on the beſt horſe, all the devils in hell are this day broke looſe againſt me, and have turned themſelves into the ſhape of litters to plague me; which ſaid, he clapped ſpurs to his horſe and rode acroſs the field, with his companion after him. Olive called Deſtiny, and recounted to him the

the adventure, the meaning of which he could not underſtand; nor indeed did he give himſelf much trouble about the matter. They had not proceeded a quarter of a league farther, when the driver of the litter, who had fallen into a profound ſleep, brought it into a quag-mire, where Rancour was like to be over-turned. The horſes having broke their traces, they were obliged to un-harneſs them, and pull them out of the dirt by neck and tail. With difficulty they reached the next village, where, whilſt the ſhattered furniture of the litter was refitting, Rancour, Olive, and Deſtiny's man took a hearty glaſs at the gate of an inn that happened to be in the village. At this inſtant came by another litter, led by two men on foot, which likewiſe ſtopped before the inn. Scarce was this litter arrived, but there appeared another an hundred ſteps be-hind it. It is my humble opinion, ſaid Rancour, that all the litters in the pro-vince have agreed to rendezvous here, about ſome buſineſs of importance; and to hold a general council; but methinks they ought to begin their conferences; for 'tis not probable that any more will come.

Nay,

Nay, ſaid the hoſteſs, here's another—and in truth they ſaw a fourth, coming from Mans, which made them all laugh heartily, except Rancour, who never laughed, as I ſaid before. The laſt litter ſtopped with the reſt; and in the memory of man, ſo many litters were never ſeen together. If thoſe that looked for litters, and whom we met a while ago, where here, they would have enough of them, ſaid the leader of the firſt litter. I have met with ſome of them, ſaid the ſecond; ſo have we, ſaid he that conducted the ſtroller's litter; to which he that came laſt added, he was like to have been thraſhed by them. But why? aſked Deſtiny. Becauſe, anſwered he, they had a deſign upon a certain gentlewoman, who ſtrained her foot, and whom we carried to Mans. I never ſaw men ſo furious and unreaſonable; they quarrelled with me, only becauſe they miſſed of what they looked for. This made the ſtrollers attentive; and by the anſwer of the litter-man to two or three queſtions they put to him, they were informed, that the lady of the lord of the village where Stella ſtrained her foot, had given her a viſit, and taken great care to have her carried ſafe to Mans. The converſation

ſation continued a little longer between the litters; aud they learnt of one another, that they were all ſearched by the ſame men whom the ſtrollers ſaw. The firſt litter carried the parſon of Domfront, who came from the wells of Belleſin, and went to Mans, in order to get the phyſicians of that place to conſult about his diſtemper. The ſecond carried a wounded officer, who returned from the army. At laſt the litters parted; thoſe of the parſon of Domfront, and of the ſtrollers, went together to Mans; and the others were they thought fit. The ſick parſon lighted at the ſame inn where the ſtrollers were quartered, being the place where he uſed to lie on that road. We will leave him to take his reſt in his room, and in our next chapter we ſhall pay a viſit to the ſtrollers, to ſee what is doing in theirs.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Wherein are contained many things neceſſary to be known, for the underſtanding of this true hiſtory.

THE ſtrolling company conſiſted of Deſtiny, Olive, and Rancour, who had each of them a ſervant, who all expected to be one day, actors in chief. Of thoſe ſervants, ſome began to ſpeak without bluſhing, or being out of countenance. But among the reſt, Deſtiny's man acted indifferently well, underſtood what he ſaid, and did not want wit. Stella, and Mrs. Cave's daughter, Angelica, played the principal parts. Mrs. Cave acted the queen, the mother, and ſometimes harlequin's miſtreſs in farces. Beſides all theſe, they had a poet or an author with them; with whoſe works all the grocers ſhops in the kingdom were ſtored. This great wit followed the company almoſt againſt their will; but becauſe he was no ſharer, and that he ſpent his own money with them, they ſuffered him to act under parts, which he nevertheleſs generally murdered. They all perceived well enough, that he was in love

love with one of the two actreſſes; but, however, he was ſo diſcreet, though a little crack-brained, that it was not yet diſcovered, which of the two he deſigned to ſooth into compliance, by his offers of making her immortal. He threatened the company with a great many plays of his own writing; but till then had ſpared them, and they only knew by conjecture, that he was about one called Martin Luther, of which they found the firſt act; which, however, he diſowned, altho' it was written with his own hand. When our ſtrollers firſt arrived, the womens chamber was continually crowded with the moſt impertinent fops and beaux of the town; whoſe eagerneſs notwithſtanding was frequently cooled by the indifferent reception they met with. They talked altogether about plays, poetry, poets, and romances; and there could not poſſibly have been more noiſe unleſs they had been fighting. The poet, among the reſt, ſurrounded by three or four, who, without doubt, were the firſt-rate wits of the town, laboured to perſuade them, that he had ſeen Corneille, craked many a bottle with St. Amant and Bruys, and loſt a good friend by the death of Rotrou. Mrs. Cave and her daughter

Angelica

Angelica ſet their goods in order, with as great tranquility, as if there had been no creature in the room. 'Tis true, Angelica's fair hands were now and then ſqueezed or kiſſed; for your country gentlemen are ever pulling and hauling; but a kick, a box on the ear, or a biting, according as occaſion required, ſoon rid her of thoſe lovers ſo valiant before their time; nor was ſhe rude and imprudent neither, but her free and gay humour would not ſuffer her to uſe much ceremony: as for her other qualities, ſhe had wit and was very honeſt. Mrs. Stella was of a quite different temper; there never was a more modeſt, gentle, and good natured woman in the world; and beſides ſhe at that time ſtrained her complaiſance ſo far, that ſhe could not find in her heart to turn theſe ogling fops out of her chamber, though ſhe felt a great pain in her ſtrained foot, and had therefore occaſion for reſt. She lay in her cloaths, on a bed ſurrounded by four or five of theſe whining coxcombs, ſtunned with their puns and clinches, which paſs for good jeſts in the country, and often forcing a ſmile upon hearing things ſhe did not like. But this is one of the greateſt plagues of that profeſſion, which, together

with their being obliged to laugh or weep, whether they have a mind to it or no, takes very much from their pleaſure of being ſometimes emperors and empreſſes, and of being called angels, though they be little handſomer than devils, or addreſſed as youthful beauties, though their hair and teeth be carried along in their wardrobe. There are many more things to be ſaid upon this ſubject, but we muſt uſe them ſparingly, and place them at convenient intervals, for variety's ſake. Let us then return to Stella, beſet with country ſquires, the moſt troubleſome of men, all great talkers, moſt of them very impertinent, and amongſt them ſome newly returned from the univerſity.

Among the reſt appeared a little man, who was a widower, a lawyer by profeſſion, and an officer in a ſmall court of judicature in the neighbourhood: Since the death of his little wife, he ſometimes threatened the women to marry again; and ſometimes the clergy of the province to turn prieſt, nay, even to become a preacher. He was the greateſt little fool that ever ran wild about ſince the times of Orlando Furioſo. He had ſtudied books all his life time; but though the chief end of learning be the knowledge of truth,

truth, yet was he as great a lyar as a court page, as proud and obſtinate as a pedant, and ſo bad a poet as to deſerve drowning; if the government would have taken care to rid the kingdom of ſuch a troubleſome race of rhymers. As ſoon as Deſtiny and his companions came into the room, without giving them the time to know who he was, he offered to read them a poem of his own making, called The Deeds and Atchievements of Charlemain, in four and twenty books. This propoſal put all the company into ſuch a fright as to make their hair ſtand an end; but Deſtiny, who, in this general terror, preſerved a little judgment, told him with a ſmile, that it was not poſſible for them to give him the hearing before ſupper. Well then, ſaid he, I will read you a ſtory taken out of a Spaniſh book, which was ſent me from Paris, and of which I deſign to make a regular play. They ſhifted the diſcourſe three or four times, on purpoſe to avoid hearing what they ſuppoſed to be abominable. But though they often interrupted him, yet did our little man not loſe courage; and, at length, with often beginning his ſtory, and encreaſing his voice, he forced them to hear him out; which, however, they

did not repent, becauſe the tale proved to be a good one, and altered the ill opinion they had of all that came from Ragotin, which was the name of our little hero.

CHAP. IX.

The hiſtory of the inviſible miſtreſs.

DON Carlos of Arragon was a young gentleman of the family that bore that name. He performed wonders at the public games, which the viceroy of Naples entertained the people with, upon the marriage of Philip the Second. The day after a running at the ring, where he bore away the prize, the viceroy gave liberty to the ladies to go about the city in maſks, after the French mode, for the conveniency of ſtrangers, whom the public rejoicings had invited thither. Upon that very day Don Carlos put on his fineſt cloaths, and with many other conquerors of hearts, repaired to the church of gallantry. Churches are prophaned in theſe countries, as well as in ours; but, as I was ſaying, Don Carlos being in a church, with ſeveral other Italian and Spaniſh

Spaniſh gentlemen, priding themſelves in the finery of their feathers, three ladies in maſks accoſted him, one of whom ſpoke to him to this effect: Signior Don Carlos, there is a lady in this city, to whom you are very much obliged, for at all the jouſts and tournaments, her wiſhes went ſtill along with you in thoſe exerciſes, wherein you bore away the prize. What I find moſt advantageous in this you tell me, anſwered Don Carlos, is to have it from the mouth of a lady who ſeems to be a perſon of merit; yet had I ſo much as hoped that any of the fair ſex had been on my ſide, I would have taken more care to deſerve her approbation. The unknown lady replied he had given all the proofs imaginable of his being a moſt dexterous and accompliſhed gentleman; and that by his black and white liveries, he had ſhewn he was not in love. I never was well acquainted with the meaning of colours, anſwered Don Carlos; but this I know, that if I am not in love, 'tis not ſo much on account of my being indifferent, as becauſe I am ſenſible I do not deſerve to be beloved. They ſaid to one another a thouſand fine things more, which I ſhall not relate, becauſe I know nothing of them,

and would be loath to make fictions, leſt I ſhould wrong Don Carlos and the unknown lady, who had much more wit than I can pretend to, as I was lately informed, by a young Neopolitan who knew them both. In ſhort, the lady in the maſk declared to Don Carlos, that 'twas ſhe who had an inclination for him: He deſired to ſee her face; which ſhe refuſed, and told him, That he muſt not expect it yet; that ſhe would look for a more proper opportunity; and that, to let him know ſhe feared not to truſt herſelf alone with him, ſhe would give ſomething as a remembrance. At theſe words ſhe pulled off her glove, and having ſhewed the Spaniard the fineſt hand in the world, preſented him with a ring; which he received with ſo great a ſurprize at the adventure, that he almoſt forgot to make a bow, and thank her upon her going from him. The other gentlemen, who out of civility had left him, being come to him again, he told them what had happened, and ſhewed them the ring, which was of conſiderable value. Every one ſpoke his thoughts upon this adventure; and Don Carlos was as much in love with the unknown lady, as if he had ſeen her face—So great is the power of wit

wit on thoſe who have it themſelves. He was eight long days without hearing from this lady; but whether he was uneaſy at it, I could never be well informed. In the mean time he went every day to divert himſelf at the houſe of a captain of foot, where ſeveral men of quality met to play. One night, having been at play, and going home ſooner than ordinary, he was called by his name out of a parlour in a great houſe. He went near the window, which was latticed, and knew, by the voice that called him, that it was his inviſible miſtreſs, who ſaid to him, Come near, Don Carlos, I expect you here to decide our controverſy. You are but a boaſter, ſaid Don Carlos; you challenge with inſolence, and yet hide yourſelf for eight days together, and then, alas! appear only through a lattice. We ſhall ſee one another nearer in time, anſwered ſhe: 'tis not for want of courage I have delayed being with you all this time, but I had a mind to know you better before I diſcovered myſelf. You know that in duels the combatants ought to fight with arms alike: now, if your heart be not as free as mine, you would fight with advantage, and therefore I have made enquiries after you. And what information

have you got? anſwered Don Carlos. That we are much upon a footing, returned the inviſible lady. But, ſaid Don Carlos, there's yet a great inequality betwixt us; for, added he, you both ſee and know who I am; whereas, I neither ſee nor know who you are: now conſider, pray, what I can judge of your concealing yourſelf, ſince people ſeldom do ſo when they have a good deſign. It is an eaſy matter to impoſe at firſt upon a man that miſtruſts nothing, but he is not to be cheated twice; if you make uſe of me only to give another jealouſy, I muſt freely tell you, that I am the moſt unfit perſon for it in the world, and that I am good for nothing elſe beſide loving you. Have you done with your raſh ſuſpicions? ſaid the inviſible lady. You may call them raſh if you pleaſe, replied Don Carlos; however, they are not really ſo. I would have you to know, ſaid ſhe, I am ſincere; you will find me ſuch in all our intercourſe; and I expect you ſhould be ſo too. That's but reaſonable, anſwered Don Carlos; but 'tis juſt likewiſe that I ſhould ſee you, and know who you are. You ſhall be ſatisfied in that e'er it be long, ſaid the inviſible lady; and in the mean time hope with patience; for that's

the

the only way for you to obtain what you expect from me. Now, that you may juſtify your love to your diſcretion, I am willing to let you know, that my birth is not inferior to yours; that I have a fortune ſufficient to make you live with as great magnificence as any prince in the kingdom; that I am rather handſome than ill-favoured; and, as for wit, you have too much of that yourſelf not to diſcover whether I have any or no. She had no ſooner made an end of her ſpeech, but ſhe withdrew, leaving Don Carlos ready to anſwer her; ſo very much in love with a perſon he never ſaw, and ſo perplexed about this odd way of proceeding, which might prove at laſt a cheat. He was not ignorant that there were a great many princeſſes and ladies of quality in Naples; but knew likewiſe, that there were abundance of rapacious courtezans in that city, eager after ſtrangers, and the more dangerous, as they were handſome. I cannot poſitively tell, whether he had ſupped at this time, or whether he went to bed without a ſupper.

Neither do I care to imitate the writers of romances, who mark with great exactneſs all the hours of the day, and make their heroes riſe betimes, relate their ad-

ventures by dinner-time, eat but little at dinner, then reſume the ſtory after dinner, or retire into the thickeſt part of a wood, in order to entertain themſelves alone: unleſs when they ſay ſomething to the rocks and trees. To return therefore to my ſtory, Don Carlos repaired the next day to his poſt, where the inviſibe lady waited his coming: ſhe aſked him if he had not been much perplexed about their laſt converſation, and if he had not doubted the truth of what ſhe told him. Don Carlos, without anſwering her queſtion, deſired her to tell him what danger ſhe feared in diſcovering herſelf, ſince they were upon even terms: and that the end of their amours being honourable, it would have the approbation of all. The danger is very great, and you will have it in time, ſaid the inviſible lady: once more be ſatisfied that I am true, and that in the account I gave you of myſelf, I was rather modeſt than vain. Don Carlos did not preſs her any farther: their converſation, which continued ſome time longer, encreaſed the mutual love they had for each other; and they parted, with promiſes to meet every day, at the appointed hour and place. The enſuing day there was a great ball at the viceroy's,

where

where Don Carlos hoped to know his inviſible charmer; but in the mean time, endeavoured to learn at whoſe houſe ſhe gave him thoſe favourable audiences. He was told by the neighbours, that it belonged to an old lady, widow to a Spaniſh captain, who had neither daughters nor nieces, and lived very retired. He deſired to wait on her, but ſhe ſent him word, that ſince her huſband died, ſhe admitted no viſits; which ſtill perplexed him more. Don Carlos went in the evening to the viceroy's, where you may imagine there was a fine and numerous aſſembly, there he nicely obſerved all the ladies, in hopes to find out his unknown miſtreſs. He engaged in converſation with ſeveral, but was diſappointed in his ſearch. At laſt he kept cloſe to the daughter of a marquis, of I know not what marquiſate, for 'twas the moſt difficult thing to know in the world, eſpecially at that juncture, when every body ſet up for quality. She was young and handſome, and had a voice not unlike that of the perſon he looked after: but then he found ſuch great diſproportion betwixt her wit and that of his inviſible, that he was ſorry he had made ſuch progreſs with this fine lady, who,

without any flattery to himſelf, he had reaſon to believe did not hate him. They danced ſeveral times together; and the ball being over, to the great ſatisfaction of Don Carlos, he took his leave of his captive, whom he left full of pride, for having had to herſelf, in ſo fine an aſſembly, a cavalier who was envied by all the men, and eſteemed by all the women. As ſoon as he came out of the ball, he went in great haſte to his houſe, and from thence to the fatal grate, which was not far off. His lady, who was there already, aſked him news of the ball, although ſhe had been there herſelf. He told her very ingenuouſly, that he had danced with a very beautiful perſon, and entertained her all the time the ball laſted. She aſked him ſeveral queſtions in relation to her, which diſcovered her jealouſy: As for Don Carlos, he let her underſtand that he began to ſuſpect her quality, by reaſon ſhe had not been at the ball. She having taken notice of it, uſed all the charms of her wit to remove his ſuſpicions, and favoured him as far as was poſſible in the converſation that paſt with a grate between; adding withal, that in a ſhort time ſhe would become viſible. They parted: Don Carlos very much in doubt,

whether

whether he ought to believe her, and ſhe ſomewhat jealous of the fine perſon he had entertained during the ball. The next day Don Carlos going to hear maſs at a certain church, offered holy water to two veiled ladies, who went to take ſome at the ſame time with him: ſhe who appeared in the better cloaths of the two told him, ſhe never accepted of any civility from one with whom ſhe had a quarrel to decide. If you are not too much in haſte, anſwered Don Carlos, you may have ſatisfaction in that this very moment. Well, ſaid the unknown lady, follow me into the next chapel. She led the way, and Don Carlos followed, very much in doubt, whether ſhe was his unknown miſtreſs or not; for though her ſhape was the ſame, yet he found ſome difference between their voices, this new lady ſpeaking ſomewhat thick. This is the ſubſtance of what ſhe told him, after ſhe had ſhut herſelf up with him in the chapel. All the city of Naples, Signior Don Carlos, talks of the high reputation you have gained during that little time you have been here; and every body looks upon you, as the moſt accompliſhed man in the world: the only thing that people wonder at, is, your not taking notice

notice that there are in this city, ſome ladies of quality and merit, who have a particular eſteem for you; they have diſcovered this to you as far as decency would allow; and, though 'tis their eager deſire to make you ſenſible of it, yet they had rather you had not taken notice of it, through inſenſibility, than that you ſhould have deſpiſed their favours through indifference. Among the reſt, there's one of my acquaintance who has ſuch a value for you, as to hazard her own reputation by telling you, that your laſt nights adventures are diſcovered; that you raſhly engage in an amour with one you do not know; and that, ſince your miſtreſs conceals herſelf, ſhe muſt either be aſhamed of her lover, or conſcious of not deſerving him. I queſtion not but the object of your contemplative love, is a lady of great quality and wit; and that your fancy has framed ſuch a miſtreſs, as is worthy of adoration upon all accounts: but, Signior Don Carlos, believe not your imagination at the expence of your judgment; truſt not a perſon who conceals herſelf, and engage no more in theſe night-converſations. But why ſhould I diſguiſe myſelf any longer? I myſelf am jealous of this phantom of yours: I cannot

not bear you ſhould ſpeak to her; and, ſince I have declared my mind ſo far, I will ſo thwart all her deſigns, that I do not much queſtion but I ſhall carry away the prize, to which I have as much right as ſhe, ſince I am not inferior to her, either in beauty, riches, quality, or love. If you are wiſe, you will make uſe of this advice. When ſhe had ſpoke theſe laſt words, ſhe went away without giving Don Carlos time to anſwer her. He was going to follow her, but met, at the church gate, a man of quality, who engaged him in a tedious converſation, from which he could not rid himſelf. He reflected the remainder of the day upon this adventure, and ſuſpected, at firſt, the lady at the ball, to be the veiled perſon that had appeared to him: but then calling to mind that ſhe had ſhewed much more wit than he had found in this, he was at a loſs what to think, and wiſhed almoſt not to have been engaged with his unknown miſtreſs, that he might give himſelf entirely up to the new one. But then again, conſidering that he knew her no better than his inviſible, whoſe wit had charmed him in all the converſation he had had with her, he firmly reſolved to be conſtant to his firſt choice, without minding

minding in the leaſt the threats of the laſt lady; for he was not to be wrought upon by fear or compulſion. That very night he failed not to return to the grated window at the uſual hour; where, in the height of his converſation with his miſtreſs, he was ſeized by four ſtrong men in maſks, who, having diſarmed him, hurried him by force into a coach that waited for them at the end of the ſtreet. I leave the reader to think, how many abuſive names he gave thoſe men in diſguiſe, and how he reproached them for attacking him at a diſadvantage: nay, he endeavoured to win them by promiſes; but, inſtead of perſuading them, he only made them more upon their guard, and put himſelf out of hopes of being able to ſhew either his ſtrength or courage. In the mean time, the coach drove on a full trot, and having got out of the city, after an hour's travelling, came into a great yard, the gate of which was kept open to receive it. The four maſkers alighted with Don Carlos, holding him under the arms, like an ambaſſador introduced to ſalute the grand-ſignior: he was carried up one pair of ſtairs in the ſame manner, where two gentlewomen in maſks came to receive him at the door of a large room,

each

each with a candleſtick in her hand, when the four men in diſguiſe took their leaves of him with a profound reverence. 'Tis probable they left him neither ſword nor piſtol, and that he did not forget to thank them for their extraordinary care of his perſon: and yet perhaps he never thought on it. As for the room, it was the moſt magnificent in the world; and, if you would know it, as well furniſhed as ſome apartments in our romances; books that have certainly the beſt furniture in the world. Now imagine what ſurprize our Spaniard was in, to find himſelf in this ſtately apartment with two ſpeechleſs women in maſks, who, having conducted him into another chamber, ſtill better furniſhed than the great room, left him all alone. Had he been of Don Quixote's humour, he would have found ſufficient matter to pleaſe his fancy, and imagined himſelf to be no leſs than Eſplandian or Amadis: but our Spaniard was no more concerned than if he had been in his inn, ſave only that he had a great regret for his inviſible lady; and as he kept his thoughts continually employed upon her, he found that chamber more melancholly than a priſon, which always looks moſt pleaſant on the outſide. He was eaſily perſuaded,

ſuaded, that thoſe who had provided him ſo fair a lodging were none of his enemies; and doubted not, but the lady who ſpoke to him the day before in the church, was the conjurer that had raiſed all theſe enchantments. He admired, within himſelf, the caprice of women, and how ſoon they put their deſigns in execution: as for his part, he reſolved to wait patiently the end of this adventure, and be faithful to his invifible miſtreſs, in ſpite of all the threats and promiſes he might receive in his new lodging. A little while after, ſeveral ſervants in maſks, and in very good cloaths, came to lay the cloth, and then ſerved up ſupper. Every thing belonging to it was magnificent; muſic and perfumes were not forgotten; and Don Carlos not only gratified his ſmell and hearing, but his taſte alſo; for he eat and drank more than I thought a man in his condition could have done. But what's impoſſible to courage! The muſic played a while after ſupper; but all being withdrawn, Don Carlos fetched many a turn about the room, reflecting on all theſe enchantments, or perhaps on ſomething elſe; then came in two women and a dwarf, all in maſks, who, without aſking him whether he had a mind to go to

bed

bed or not, ſpread a magnificent toilet, in order to undreſs him. He complied with them in every thing: the woman turned down the bed-cloaths, and then withdrew: the dwarf pulled off his ſhoes, and then his other cloaths: all which being done without exchanging a word, Don Carlos went to bed, and ſlept pretty well for a man in love. At break of day he was waked by the ſinging of birds, that fluttered about in an aviary; the dwarf came to wait upon him, and brought him the fineſt linnen in the world, and the beſt waſhed and perfumed. If you pleaſe, I ſhall not mention what he did till dinner (which was at leaſt as good as his ſupper had been) but paſs to the firſt breaking of that profound ſilence, which had been obſerved to that very hour. A gentlewoman in a maſk began to ſpeak, by aſking him if he would be pleaſed to ſee the miſtreſs of that inchanted palace. Don Carlos ſaid, ſhe ſhould be welcome: and a little after ſhe came in, attended by four women very richly dreſſed.

Such were not Cytherea's *charms,*
When dreſt in gay and looſe attire,
She flew to a new lover's arms,
Upon the wings of ſoft deſire.

Never

Never had our Spaniard ſeen a perſon of more majeſtic mein than this unknown Urganda. He was ſo tranſported, and ſurprized at the ſame time, that he ſtumbled at every bow and ſtep he made, as he led her into the next room, whither ſhe directed him.

All the fine things he had ſeen in the other rooms where nothing in compariſon to what he found in this laſt, which ſtill received new brightneſs from the maſked lady. They walked on the fineſt carpet that ever was ſeen, ſince carpets were in faſhion: there the Spaniard was placed in an arm-chair in ſpite of himſelf; and the lady ſitting by herſelf, on a ſopha over againſt him, raviſhed his ears with a voice as ſweet as an harpſichord, ſpeaking to him to this effect. I doubt not, Signior Don Carlos, but you are much ſurprized at what has happened to you in my houſe ſince yeſterday; but if all this is not able to move you, yet by it you may ſee I am as good as my word; and from what I have done, you may gueſs what I am able to do. Perhaps my rival, both by her artifice, and the advantage ſhe has of having attacked you firſt, has made herſelf abſolute miſtreſs of that heart, which I nevertheleſs pretend

to

to diſpute my right to with her: but a woman is not to be diſcouraged by the firſt diſappointment; and if my fortune, which is not deſpicable, together with my perſon, cannot perſuade you to love me; yet ſhall I have the ſatisfaction of not concealing myſelf out of ſhame or deceit, and chuſe to be deſpiſed through my defects, rather than be beloved through my artifice. As ſhe ſpoke theſe laſt words, ſhe pulled off her maſk, and ſhewed Don Carlos the heavens with all their glories; or, if you pleaſe, a heaven in miniature: the fineſt face in the world, ſupported by the beſt ſhape he ever admired before; in ſhort, a perſon all over divine. By the freſhneſs of her complexion, one would not have thought her to have been above ſixteen years of age; but by a certain free and majeſtic air, which young perſons generally want, ſhe appeared to be near twenty. Don Carlos pauſed a while before he anſwered her, being almoſt angry with his inviſible lady, who hindered him from ſurrendering himſelf intirely to the fineſt perſon he ever ſaw, and dubious what he ſhould ſay or do. At laſt, after an inward conflict, which laſted ſo long, as to make the miſtreſs of the inchanted palace uneaſy, he took a firm

firm reſolution not to conceal from her his inmoſt thoughts; which, without any manner of queſtion, was the beſt he could do. This is the anſwer he gave her, which ſome have thought a little too open. Madam, I could not but own myſelf extremely happy in your eſteem, if my ſtars would but ſuffer me to love you. I ſee, well enough, that I leave the fineſt perſon in the univerſe, for one, who, perhaps, is only ſuch in my fancy; but, madam, would you think me worth your affection, if you found me capable of infidelity? And how can I be faithful, if I love you? Therefore, madam, pity me, but blame me not: or rather let us pity each other, and complain both; you of not obtaining what you deſire, and I of not ſeeing what I love. He uttered theſe words with ſuch a melancholy air, that the lady might eaſily perceive he ſpoke his true ſentiments. She uſed all the arguments ſhe could think of to perſuade him to alter his mind, but he was deaf to her prayers, and unconcerned at her tears. She renewed the attack ſeveral times, but met ſtill with a ſtout reſiſtance. At laſt ſhe began to revile and reproach him, and told him,

What rage and jealouſy ſuggeſt,
When they poſſeſs a love-ſick breaſt;

and then ſhe left him, not to tranquility, but to curſe a hundred times his misfortune, which proceeded only from being too happy. A lady came a little after to acquaint him, that he had the liberty to walk in the garden. He traverſed all theſe fine apartments, without meeting any body, till he came to the ſtair-caſe, at the foot of which he ſaw ten men in maſks, who kept the door, armed with carabines. As he was croſſing the court to go into the garden, one of the gentlemen of the guard accoſted him without looking him in the face, and told him, as though he feared to be overheard, That an old gentleman had truſted him with a letter, which he had promiſed to deliver into his own hands, though his life muſt anſwer for it, if he ſhould be diſcovered; but that a preſent of twenty piſtoles, and a promiſe of as many more, made him run all hazards. Don Carlos promiſed him ſecreſy, and went ſtrait into the garden, where he read the letter, as follows:

"You may judge what pains I have felt ſince I loſt you, by thoſe you ought to

to feel yourſelf, if you love me as much as I do you: However, my uneaſineſs is ſomething abated, by being informed of the place where you are. 'Tis the princeſs Porcia who ſtole you away; ſhe's a woman that ſtops at nothing to pleaſe herſelf, and you are not the firſt Rinaldo of that dangerous Armida. But I will ſoon break all her inchantments, and diſengage you from her arms, to receive you into mine; which favour you will deſerve, if you are as conſtant as I wiſh you to be to

"*The Inviſible Lady.*"

Don Carlos was ſo tranſported with joy, at this news from his miſtreſs, with whom he was really in love, that he kiſſed the letter a hundred times over, and came back to the garden-door, to recompence the meſſenger with a fine diamond ring he had on his finger. He walked a little longer in the garden, ſtill wondering at the princeſs Porcia, whom he often heard people report to be a young lady, rich and of the beſt family in the kingdom; but as he was a perſon of ſtrict virtue, he conceived ſuch an averſion for her, that he reſolved to break out of his priſon, even at the hazard of his life. As he came

out of the garden, he met a lady unmaſked (for from that time forward, every body went barefaced in the palace) who came to aſk, if he would be pleaſed to have her miſtreſs eat with him? And I leave you to think whether he anſwered, ſhe ſhould be welcome. A little after they ſerved up ſupper, or dinner, for I have forgot which of the two it ought to have been: Porcia appeared more beautiful, as was ſaid, than Venus; and it will not be amiſs, if, for variety ſake, I now ſay, than an angel: ſhe was charming in every reſpect; and during the time they were at table, the Spaniard diſcovered ſo much wit, that he was in a manner ſorry, to find ſo many excellent qualities, ſo ill beſtowed on a perſon of ſo high a degree. He did all he could to appear in good humour, and forced a pleaſing countenance, although he was continually thinking upon his unknown miſtreſs; and burnt with impatience to return to the lattice. As ſoon as table was cleared, they were left by themſelves; and becauſe Don Carlos ſpoke not a word, either out of reſpect, or only to oblige the lady to ſpeak firſt, ſhe broke ſilence in theſe words: I know not whether I ought to hope ſomething from the gaiety I fancy I have diſcovered in your

face; and whether mine, which you have ſeen already, does ſeem handſome enough to make you doubt, whether that of your inviſible miſtreſs, has more charms to captivate your heart. I do not conceal what I deſigned to preſent you with, becauſe I would not have you repent the accepting my preſent; and though a perſon who has been uſed to be inſtructed by others, be apt to be offended at a denial; yet will I forgive you, provided you repair your paſt offence, by giving me what I have more right to than your inviſible: therefore tell me your laſt reſolution, that, if in caſe it be not in my favour, I may at leaſt find out new reaſons, ſtrong enough to combat thoſe, which I think I had to love you. Don Carlos thought ſhe would have gone on; but obſerving ſhe ſpoke no more, and that, with eyes fixed on the ground, ſhe expected her doom from his mouth; he reſumed his former reſolution of telling her frankly, that he could never be her's. Madam, ſaid he, before I anſwer what you would know of me, I muſt deſire you, that, with the ſame frankneſs you expect from me, you would be pleaſed to tell me your ſentiments, about what I am going to propoſe to you. Suppoſe, added he, you had engaged a man to love you, and that

by

by all the favours a lady can grant without wronging her virtue, you had obliged him to ſwear an inviolable fidelity, would you not account him the baſeſt and moſt treacherous of mankind, if he ſhould fail in his promiſe? And were I not that villain, and that traitor, if I ſhould leave, for you, a perſon who has reaſon to think I love her? He was going on with his arguments, to convince her; however ſhe did not give him time, but riſing abruptly from her ſeat, told him, that ſhe plainly ſaw the drift of his diſcourſe; that ſhe could not but admire his conſtancy, tho' ſo much oppoſite to her own quiet, that ſhe would ſet him at liberty; and that ſhe only deſired him to ſtay till night, to go back in the ſame manner he came. While ſhe was ſpeaking, ſhe held her hankerchief to her eyes, as tho' ſhe deſigned to conceal her tears, and afterwards left the Spaniard a little concerned; yet ſo tranſported with joy that he was to be again at liberty, that he had not been able to conceal it, had he been the greateſt hypocrite in the world; and I verily believe, that had the lady taken notice of it, ſhe would certainly have ſcolded him for it. I know not whether it was long before night came, for, as I told you before, I

don't trouble myſelf about marking the time: you muſt be contented to know, that night came at laſt, and that he went into a cloſe coach, and was ſet down at his lodgings, after a pretty long journey. As he was the beſt maſter in the world, ſo his ſervants were quite tranſported at the ſight of him, and almoſt ſtifled him with their embraces; but they did not enjoy him long; for having provided himſelf with arms, and taken two of his ſtouteſt men with him, he preſently went to the grated-window in ſuch haſte, that thoſe who accompanied him, had enough to do to keep pace with him. He had no ſooner given the uſual ſignal, but his inviſible deity communicated herſelf to him, when they exchanged the ſofteſt and tendereſt expreſſions. At laſt the lady told him, ſhe had been lately affronted in that houſe, and therefore had ſent for a coach in order to leave it; but becauſe it might be a long while coming, ſhe deſired him to ſend for his, which might be ſooner got ready; and that ſhe would carry him to a place, where ſhe would no longer conceal her face from him. The Spaniard needed no farther intreaty, but ran like a mad man to his men, whom he left at the end of the ſtreet, and ſent for his coach in all haſte:

haſte: the coach being come, the inviſible lady kept her word, and went into it with Don Carlos. She directed the coachman which way he ſhould drive, and bid him ſtop at a great houſe, into the court-yard of which the coach went by the light of ſeveral flambeaux, which were lighted at their arrival. The cavalier leading his lady, went up ſtairs into a very large room, where he was a little uneaſy, becauſe ſhe did not pull off her maſk. At laſt ſeveral ladies being come to receive them, with each a candleſtick in her hand, the lady was inviſible no longer; but pulling off her maſk, let Don Carlos ſee, that the lady at the grated-window, and the princeſs Porcia, were but one perſon. I will not endeavour to deſcribe the pleaſant ſurprize of the Spaniard: the fair Neapolitan told him, ſhe had ſtolen him away a ſecond time to know his laſt reſolution; that the lady at the lattice had made over to her all her pretenſions, and added a thouſand expreſſions, no leſs obliging than ingenuous. Don Carlos threw himſelf at her feet, embraced her knees, and devoured, as one may ſay, her hands with kiſſes: by that means avoiding all the impertinence and nonſenſe which people generally ſpeak when they are tranſported with joy. The

raptures of his paſſion being over, he uſed all his wit and eloquence to extol the agreeable caprice of his miſtreſs, and expreſt himſelf ſo much to her advantage, that he confirmed her, ſhe was not miſtaken in her choice. She told him, ſhe had been unwilling to truſt any body but herſelf in a thing, without which ſhe could never have loved him; and that ſhe would never have beſtowed herſelf upon a man leſs conſtant than he was. Upon this the princeſs's relations came in, having had notice given them of her deſign: and as they were the chief men in the kingdom, they eaſily obtained a diſpenſation from the archbiſhop for their marriage. The ſame night the ceremony was performed by the prieſt of the pariſh, who was a good preacher; and ſo it were needleſs to aſk, whether he made a fine exhortation upon the ſubject. It is ſaid, they got up late the next day, which I am inclined to believe. The news was ſoon ſpread about, at which, the viceroy, a near relation of Don Carlos's, was ſo overjoyed, that the public rejoicings began a-new in Naples; where, to this day, they talk of Don Carlos of Arragon, and his inviſible miſtreſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

How Ragotin *received a blow on the fingers with a buſk.*

RAGOTIN'S ſtory received general applauſe, and he valued himſelf as much upon it, as if it had been his own; which ſwelling his natural pride, he began to treat the actors with contempt; and afterwards accoſting the women, ſqueezed their hands without their conſent, and offered to feel their breaſts; a piece of country gallantry, which ſavours more of the ſatyr than the gentleman. Stella contented herſelf to force her ſoft, fair hand from his dirty clutches; but Angelica her companion ſmiling, gave him a rap on the fingers with her buſk. He left them abruptly, without ſo much as ſpeaking a word, glowing with rage and confuſion, and returned to the men's company, where every one ſpoke as faſt as he could, without minding what the reſt ſaid. Ragotin ſilenced moſt of them, by demanding of them, with a ſuperior voice, what they thought of his novel? A young man, whoſe name I have forgot, anſwered him bluntly, it was no more his than any bo-

dy's elſe in the company, ſince he had it out of a book: and ſeeing one ſtick out of Ragotin's pocket he pulled it out; which the little man perceiving, ſcratched his hands to get it from him; but in ſpite of Ragotin, he put it into another man's hands, from whom Ragotin endeavoured to ſnatch it, to as little purpoſe as before. The book having got by this time into a third man's hands, after the ſame manner paſſed to five or ſix different hands more; which Ragotin however could not reach, becauſe he was the ſhorteſt man in the company. At laſt, having ſtretched himſelf five or ſix times in vain, torn half a dozen pair of ruffles, ſcratched as many hands, and the book ſtill travelling about through the middle region of the chamber, poor Ragotin, who ſaw every body laugh at his expence, ruſhed like a madman upon the firſt author of his confuſion, and dealt him ſeveral blows on his belly and thighs, not being able to reach higher. The hands of his adverſary, who had the advantage of ſituation, fell five or ſix times ſo perpendicular, and heavy on the top of his head, that the crown of his hat ſunk down to his very chin; which ſo ſhook the ſeat of his reaſon, that the poor little man did not, for ſome time, know where

where he was. To compleat his defeat, his antagoniſt at parting, gave him a ſound kick on the head, which, after a very ſudden retrogradation, made him fall at his feet. Now, if poſſible, I would have you to conceive the rage and fury of a little man, more proud than all the decayed gentry in the kingdom, at a time when he was exulting in the ſucceſs of his ſtory; and that too, before actreſſes to whom he deſigned to make love; tho' he was yet ignorant, which of them had the greater title to his heart. To ſpeak the truth, his little body thus tumbled on his breech, did ſo livelily repreſent the fury of his ſoul, by the different motions of his arms and legs, that tho' his face could not be ſeen, becauſe his whole head was enchaſed into his hat, yet all the company thought fit to join, and form, as it were, a barrier betwixt Ragotin and his adverſary; who, by this means, got away, whilſt the charitable actreſſes raiſed the poor little man, roaring like a lion in his hat, which ſtopped his eyes and mouth, and almoſt hindered him from fetching his breath. Now the difficulty was, how to pull off his hat, for its crown being in the form of a butter-pot, and the mouth of it narrower than the bottom, it was almoſt im-

poſſible for a head that got itſelf in by force, and whoſe noſe was ſo exceſſive large, to be able to get out the ſame way. This misfortune had a good effect; for his anger being now at the higheſt, without doubt, its conſequences had been anſwerable, had not his hat, which ſuffocated him, made him conſult his own preſervation, rather than contrive the deſtruction of others. He did not cry out for help, becauſe he had not the uſe of his tongue: but when the company perceived he lifted up, in vain, his hands to his head, in order to ſet it at liberty, and ſtamped on the floor with rage and indignation, they all bent their thoughts on his relief. The firſt efforts they uſed to pull off his hat were ſo violent, that he thought they had been going to pluck off his head too: at laſt, being almoſt ſpent, he made ſigns with his fingers to have it cut with a pair of ſciſſars. Mrs. Cave unclapſt thoſe ſhe wore on her girdle; and Rancour, who was to perform the operation, having made a ſhew of making the inciſion over againſt his face, (which did not a little fright him) at laſt, he cut his hat behind, from top to bottom. As ſoon as he had given vent to his face, all the company fell a laughing to ſee it bloated, as if it had

had been ready to burſt, upon account of the vaſt quantity of ſpirits that had fluſhed to it; and beſides, his noſe was a little excoriated. However, the jeſt had gone no farther, had not a bungling taylor adviſed him to get his hat fine-drawn. This unſeaſonable advice ſo revived his anger, which was not entirely extinguiſhed, that he laid hold of one of the andirons, and threatned to throw it at the company; which put the ſtouteſt of them all in ſuch a fright, that every one ran to the door, in order to avoid the impending ruin. They preſſed ſo faſt upon one another, that not above one was able to get out; and he too by a fall. It was now Ragotin fell a laughing in his turn, which gave all the company freſh courage; they therefore returned him his book, and the players lent him an old hat. It is true he ſtill was angry with the man who uſed him ſo ſcurvily; but being ſomewhat more vain than revengeful, he told the players, with the air of one that was going to promiſe ſome extraordinary thing, that he had a mind to make a play out of this ſtory of his, and would contrive it ſo well, that he was ſure to get as much reputation by that ſingle piece, as other poets had in all their lives gained by ſeveral. Deſtiny told him the ſtory he had related

was very entertaining, but would, by no means, fit the ſtage. Sure, ſaid Ragotin, you won't pretend to teach me; I would have you to know, that my mother was ſeamſtreſs to the poet Garnier, and I myſelf am poſſeſſed of his ſtandiſh. Deſtiny replied, that even Garnier would get no reputation by it, tho' he were to do it himſelf. But what difficulty do you find in it? aſked Ragotin. The difficulty, anſwered Deſtiny, is in that it cannot be brought into a regular play, without committing a great many faults, both in point of decorum and judgment. As for that, ſaid Ragotin, a man of my parts, may make new rules whenever he pleaſes. Pray conſider, added he, what a new and magnificent thing it would be, to repreſent a great church-gate in front of the ſtage, before which twenty beaux, more or leſs, with as many ladies, ſhould appear and ſpeak a thouſand fine things to one another; would it not raviſh all the ſpectators with admiration think you? Deſtiny interrupted, to aſk him, where they could get ſo many gentlemen and ladies? And how do they in colleges, ſaid Ragotin, where they fight pitched battles? I myſelf played at La Fleſche, the Overthrow at the Bridge of So, when above a hundred ſoldiers of the queen-

queen-mother's party appeared on the ſtage, beſides thoſe of the king's army, which was more numerous: and I remember, in conſequence of a great ſhower that fell that day and ſpoiled the ſport, it was reported, that all the fine feathers of the country quality, which had been borrowed on this occaſion, would never come to themſelves again. Deſtiny, who took great delight in hearing him utter all theſe judicious things, replied, that colleges had ſcholars enough for that purpoſe, whereas their company did never conſiſt in all of above ſeven or eight perſons: Rancour, who, you know, had ever been a malicious dog, ſided with Ragotin merely to make him ridiculous, and told his comrade, he was not of his opinion; that he had been a player before him, that a church-gate would be the fineſt ſcene that ever was ſeen; and as for the neceſſary number of gentlemen and ladies, that they might have ſome fleſh and blood, and repreſent the reſt with paſteboard. This fine expedient of paſteboard, invented by Rancour, ſet all the company a laughing: Ragotin laughed with the reſt, and ſwore he knew that contrivance well enough, but had a mind to keep it to himſelf. As for coaches,

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added he, will it not be a novelty in a play? I formerly perſonated Tobit's dog, and did it ſo to the life, that the whole audience was highly pleaſed with my performance, taking me to be a real dog. As for my part, continued he, if we may judge of things by the effects they work upon our minds, I never ſaw Pyramus and Thiſbe acted in my life, but I was leſs concerned at his death, than frighted by the roaring of the lion. Rancour backed Ragotin's reaſons with others as ridiculous, and by that means, ingratiated himſelf ſo far with him, that Ragotin took him to ſupper. The reſt of the impertinents left likewiſe the players at liberty; who, it is probable, had much rather go to ſupper, than entertain theſe idle fellows of the town.

CHAP. XI.

Which contains what you'll find, if you'll but take pains to read it.

RAGOTIN carried Rancour to a tavern, where he called for the beſt things the houſe could afford. It is thought he would not carry him to his own

own houſe, becauſe his commons were but indifferent; but I will ſay nothing about that, for fear of paſſing raſh judgments; neither do I care to enquire much into the truth of that buſineſs, becauſe I do not think it worth my while, eſpecially having matters of far greater importance to relate. Rancour, who was a perſon of great diſcernment, and knew his men at firſt ſight, no ſooner ſaw a brace of partridges and capon ſerved up for two people, but he began to think, that Ragotin had ſome deſign or other, and did not treat him ſo well, either upon account of his own merit, or to repay the civility he had received from him, in maintaining his ſtory to be a good ſubject for a play. He therefore expected to hear ſome new extravagance from Ragotin, who, however, did not diſcover his thoughts at firſt, but continued talking of his novel. However, he at length repeated ſeveral lampoons he had made upon moſt of his neighbours, ſome cuckolds that were nameleſs, and their wives that made them ſo. He ſung drunken catches, and ſhewed Rancour numberleſs acroſtics and anagrams; which are generally the firſt things with which your paltry rhimers begin to plague us. Rancour made

made him a complete coxcomb, by crying up all he heard, with eyes lifted to Heaven; and ſwore like a loſing gameſter, that he never heard any thing ſo fine in his life: nay, he was ſo tranſported, that he made a ſhew of pulling off his hair in an extaſy of pleaſure. He told him now and then, that it was a great misfortune, that he did not leave off all other buſineſs and write for the ſtage; for in ſuch a caſe, in two or three years time, Corneille would be no more talked of, than Alexander Hardy. I am, added he, an abſolute ſtranger to flattery; but to encourage you, muſt own, I no ſooner ſaw you, but I read in your face, that you were a great poet; and you may be ſatisfied by my companions, what I told them about it. I am ſeldom miſtaken; I can ſmell a poet at two miles diſtance; and therefore as ſoon as ever I caſt my eyes on you, I was as much acquainted with your genius, as if I had brought you up. All this fulſome ſtuff went down with Ragotin as glib as his wine, which now began to intoxicate his brain, as much as Rancour's commendations had ſwelled his vanity. As for Rancour, he eat and drank very heartily, crying out now and then, for God's ſake, monſieur Ragotin, improve

improve your talent: once more let me tell you, you are much to blame, not to make your fortune and ours. For my part, I ſcraul a little paper ſometimes as well as other people, but if I could make verſes half ſo good as thoſe you have been reading to me, I ſhould not have been ſo hard put to it to keep life and ſoul together, but would live upon my income as well as Mondory. Therefore, monſieur Ragotin, once more, pray write; and if this next winter we do not eclipſe the companies of Paris, may I never tread the ſtage any more without breaking one of my arms or legs. I will ſay no more, and ſo let us drink. He was as good as his word; for having filled a bumper, he drank monſieur's Ragotin's health to Ragotin himſelf, who pledged him after the ſame manner, and returned his civility with drinking the health of the actreſſes. This he drank cap in hand, and in ſuch rapture, that as he ſet the glaſs down on the table, he broke its foot, without taking notice of it; however, he afterwards attempted three or four times to ſet it upright, but finding it impoſſible, he at laſt flung it over his head; and pulling Rancour by the ſleeve, let him know he had had the honour of breaking a glaſs

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in drinking a health to the ladies. It vexed him a little that Rancour did not laugh at it; but, as I ſaid before, he was rather an envious than a riſible animal. Rancour aſked him, what he thought of their women?—The little man bluſhed, without giving an anſwer: but Rancour putting the ſame queſtion to him again, at laſt, what by his fluttering, bluſhing, and broken ſpeech, he gave Rancour to underſtand, that he liked one of the actreſſes extremely. But which of them? quoth Rancour. The little man was ſo diſordered for having ſaid ſo much, that he anſwered, I don't know—— Nor I neither, ſaid Rancour. This reply caſt him into a greater diſorder, inſomuch, that, with a bewildered look, he ſaid, It is, it is—He repeated the ſame words five or ſix times over again; at which the ſtroller growing impatient, cried, I like your choice, ſhe is indeed very beautiful. This put him quite out of countenance; inſomuch, that he could never tell which he loved moſt, though it may be he knew nothing of the matter himſelf, or that his paſſion was rather luſt than love. At laſt, Rancour naming miſs Stella, he ſaid, it was her with whom he was in love: for my part, I verily believe, that had he

he named either Angelica, or mother Cave, he would have forgot the blow he had received with a buſk from the one, and the age of the other, and given himſelf body and ſoul to the very firſt that Rancour thought fit to mention. The ſtroller, however, made him drink a good bumper, in which the other pledged him; and looking about the room, whiſpered ſomething, as though it were a great ſecret he was about to tell, though there was no body preſent, Well, your wound is not mortal, quoth Rancour, and you have addreſſed yourſelf to one who is able to cure you, provided you will be but ruled by him, and keep counſel; not but your enterprize is a little difficult; for miſs Stella is a very tygreſs, and her brother Deſtiny a lion: but ſtill ſhe does not ſee men every day like you, and I know what I can do; let us drink out our liquor, for to-morrow will be the day. They drank each a glaſs of wine, which interrupted their converſation for a while. After this, Ragotin recounted all his accompliſhments and riches, and told Rancour, that a nephew of his, was clerk to a financier; that this nephew had contracted great friendſhip with the partizan de Ralliere, during the time he was at Mans, to ſettle an exciſe-office there,

there, by the means of which nephew's intereſt he endeavoured to give him hopes that he would procure him ſuch a penſion from the king as his players in ordinary had. He told him likewiſe, that if any of his relations had children, he could prefer them in the church, as his neice had married the brother of a certain miſs, kept by the ſteward of an abbot of that province, who had good livings in his gift. Whilſt Ragotin was thus relating what great intereſt he had, Rancour, who, the more he drank, the more thirſty he grew, was ſtill filling both the glaſſes, which were emptied in an inſtant, Ragotin not daring to refuſe any thing from the hands of a man from whom he expected ſuch ſervices. In ſhort, they drank about, till they had both enough. Rancour, according to his cuſtom, grew more ſerious, but Ragotin became ſo dull and heavy, that he laid down his head on the table, and fell aſleep. Rancour called one of the maids to make a bed ready for him, becauſe no body was up at his inn. The maid told him, ſhe had as good make two beds, as ſhe was ſure monſieur Ragotin wanted one as well as he. In the mean time he ſlept and ſnored as heartily as ever he had done in his life, notwithſtanding the noiſe

noiſe they made while they were putting clean ſheets on two of the three beds that were in the room; ſo that when the maid came to wake him, and acquaint him his bed was ready, he called her a thouſand whores, and threatened to beat her. At laſt, Rancour, having turned him in his chair, towards the fire, at which the ſheets were aired, he rubbed and opened his eyes, and ſuffered himſelf to be undreſſed without repining. They got him into his bed as well as they could; and Rancour, having firſt made the chamber-door faſt, went into his own. About an hour after, Ragotin got up, for what purpoſe I never yet could learn. He rambled a long time about the room, not knowing where he was; and having overturned all the chairs and tables he met in his way, and tumbled himſelf down ſeveral times, without being able to find his bed again, he went at laſt to Rancour's, and pulling his bed-cloaths, made him ſtart out of his ſleep. Rancour aſked him, what he would have? I am looking for my bed again, ſaid Ragotin—It is on the left hand of mine, replied Rancour. The little drunken man, however, took the right, and thruſt himſelf betwixt the rug and matraſs of the third bed, which had

neither

neither feather bed, quilt, nor ſheets, and there he ſlept all night very quietly. Rancour got up and dreſſed himſelf before Ragotin waked; when he aſked him, whether he choſe to leave his own bed in order to ſleep on ſtraw? Ragotin was poſitive that he never got up, and that the room muſt be haunted. The innkeeper hearing this, ſtood up for the reputation of his houſe, picked a quarrel with Ragotin, and threatened to ſue him for giving it an ill name. But let us return to the ſtrollers in the inn.

CHAP. XII.

A combat in the night.

I Am too much a man of honour not to adverti ſe the courteous reader, that if he be offended at all the ſilly trifles he has already found in this book, he will do well not to go on with the reading of it; for upon my conſcience, he muſt expect nothing elſe, although the volume ſhould ſwell to the ſize of that of the Grand Cyrus: and if from what he has read, he doubts what will follow, perhaps I am in the ſame dilemma myſelf: for one chapter draws

draws on another, and I do with my book as ſome do with their horſes, putting the bridle on their necks, and truſting to their good conduct. As ſoon as their room was cleared, and Rancour had got to the inn with Ragotin, the door-keeper they left at Tours came into the inn, with a horſe load of goods, and ſat down to ſupper with them. By this perſon, and what they had learnt from one another, they underſtood that the intendant of the province could do them no harm, having had much ado to eſcape the hands of the boiſterous mob with his fuziliers. Deſtiny told his comrades how he had got away in his Turkiſh habit, with which he deſigned to repreſent Soliman; and that being informed that the plague was at Alençon, he was come to Mans with Cave and Rancour, in the equipage we have deſcribed in the beginning of theſe moſt true, heroic, comical adventures. Stella acquainted them alſo with the good offices ſhe had received from a lady at Tours, whoſe name never came to my knowledge; and how, by her means, ſhe had been conducted as far as a village near Boneſtable, where ſhe ſtrained her foot as ſhe alighted off her horſe. She added that hearing the company was gone to Mans,

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ſhe got herſelf carried thither in a litter, which the lady of that village had lent her with a great deal of civility. After ſupper Deſtiny alone ſtayed in the ladies chamber; Cave loved him as if he had been her own ſon; Stella was no leſs dear to her; and her daughter and only heireſs Angelica, loved Deſtiny and Stella like a brother and ſiſter. She did not yet exactly know who they were, nor upon what account they had turned players; but ſhe had taken notice, that though they called one another brother and ſiſter, yet were they better friends than near relations; that Deſtiny paid to Stella the greateſt reſpect imaginable; that ſhe was extreme modeſt and virtuous: and as Deſtiny had a great deal of wit, and ſeemed to have a liberal education, ſo Stella looked more like a young lady of quality, than a ſtroller. Now Deſtiny and Stella were beloved by Cave and her daughter, becauſe they really deſerved their love, both from their good qualities, and the mutual friendſtip which they naturally had for two players, who had as much merit as any in France, though they never had the good fortune to tread either of the two theatres in Paris, which are the *Ne plus ultra* of a French player. Thoſe who do not under-

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ſtand theſe three little Latin words (which come ſo pat in my way, that I could not refuſe to place them there) may be pleaſed to aſk ſome Latiniſt of their acquaintance the meaning of them. To end this digreſſion, Deſtiny and Stella did not ſcruple to expreſs their mutual fondneſs before Cave and Angelica, and ſhew their extreme joy they had to each other after ſo long an abſence. They related, as pathetically as they could, how uneaſy they were about each other; and Deſtiny acquainted Stella, that the laſt time they acted at Tours, he thought he had ſpied their inveterate perſecutor amongſt the croud of their auditors, although he had his cloak about his face: and that as he went out of the city, not finding himſelf able to reſiſt him if he had offered to attack him, he had diguiſed himſelf, by putting a great patch on his face. He told her afterwards, how many litters they met with when they went to fetch her; adding, he was much miſtaken if their common enemy was not the ſame unknown perſon, who had ſearched ſo minutely all the litters, as you have ſeen in the ſeventh chapter. Whilſt Deſtiny was ſpeaking, poor Stella could not forbear ſhedding a few tears; Deſtiny was

ſenſibly touched with them; and having comforted her as well as he could, added, that if ſhe would but ſuffer him to uſe the ſame endeavours in ſeeking out their enemy, as he had uſed, till then, in avoiding him, he would ſoon free her from his perſecutions, or looſe his life in the attempt. Theſe laſt words redoubled her grief: Deſtiny had not courage enough to forbear grieving likewiſe: and Cave and her daughter, who were of a tender and compaſſionate temper, grieved alſo, either out of complaiſance, or through contagion. At laſt Cave renewed the converſation which tears had interrupted, and reproached Deſtiny and Stella, that, though during the time that they had lived together, they might have been convinced how much ſhe was their friend, yet they repoſed ſo little confidence in her and her daughter, that they were ſtill unacquainted with their birth and quality; adding, ſhe had certainly met with croſſes enough in her life, to enable her to adviſe unfortunate perſons, ſuch as they two ſeemed to be. To which Deſtiny anſwered, that their not diſcovering themſelves to her, was not out of any diſtruſt, but becauſe he thought the recital of their misfortunes could not but be very tedious;

telling

telling her alſo that he would be ready to entertain her with the ſtory of their adventures, whenever ſhe was willing to throw time away in hearing it. Cave was glad of this oportunity to ſatisfy her curioſity; and her daughter, who had the ſame inclination, being unlaced near her, on Stella's bed, Deſtiny was about to begin his ſtory, when they heard a great noiſe in the next chamber. Deſtiny ſtood liſtening a while; but the noiſe and ſquabble ſtill increaſing, and ſome body crying out, murther, help, murther, he, with three leaps, got out of the chamber, at the expence of a ſkirt, which Cave and Angelica had torn as they were going to ſtop him. He went into the chamber from whence the noiſe came, which was ſo dark that he could not ſee his own noſe; and where the cuffs, boxes on the ears, and ſeveral confuſed voices of fighting men and women, together with the hollow noiſe of naked feet ſtamping on the floor, made a hideous and frightful concert. He ran very raſhly amongſt the combatants, and in one moment received a blow on one ſide, and a box on the other; which changed his good intention of parting thoſe hob-goblins, into a violent thirſt of revenge. He began to

ſet his hands a-going, and made a flouriſh with his two arms, by which many a black eye enſued, as it afterwards appeared. The ſcuffle laſted ſo long, that he received twenty blows more, which he however returned, with double the number. In the heat of the fight, he felt himſelf bit on the calf of the leg; when clapping his hands to the place, he met with ſomething hairy, which he for that reaſon took to be a dog; but Cave and her daughter, who appeared at the chamber door at that interim with a candle, like the fire at St. Helmo after a ſtorm, diſcovered to Deſtiny that he was amidſt ſeven perſons in their ſhirts, who having been in cloſe conflict before, began to let one another go, as ſoon as the light appeared. This tranquility, however, did not laſt long. The inn-keeper, who was one of the naked combatants, grappling the poet a-new; Olive, who was alſo amongſt them, was attacked by the inn-keeper's man, who was another of the combatants: Deſtiny went to part them, whereupon, the hoſteſs, who was the animal that had bit him, and whom he had taken for a dog, by reaſon ſhe was bare-headed, and had ſhort hair, flew at his face, aſſiſted by two maids, as naked and bare-headed as herſelf.

herſelf. Their ſhrieks and cries filled the air once more, the cuffs and boxes made the room to ring again, and the fight grew ſtill warmer and warmer. At laſt, ſeveral perſons who waked at the noiſe, came into the field of battle, parted the combatants, and procured a ſecond ſuſpenſion of arms. Now the queſtion was to know the occaſion of the quarrel, and what fatal accident had brought ſeven naked perſons into one room. Olive, who ſeemed the leaſt concerned, ſaid, that the poet being gone out of the room, he ſaw him come running back as faſt as he could, followed by the inn-keeper, who ſeemed to have a mind to beat him; that the hoſteſs following her huſband fell foul of the poet; that as he was going to part them, a ſervant and two maids fell upon him; and that the light happening to go out at the ſame time, made the fight laſt longer than it would otherwiſe have done. Now it was the poet's turn to ſpeak for himſelf: he ſaid, that having made two of the fineſt ſtanzas that ever were written ſince ſtanzas were in faſhion; and fearing to loſe them, he went to the maid of the inn for a candle, which ſhe ſcornfully refuſed to give him; whereupon, the inn-keeper called him a rope-dancer; which

he returned by calling him a cuckold. He had no ſooner ſpoke this laſt word, but the hoſt, who was within reach, gave him a blow on the chops; as ſoon as the blow was given, the inn-keeper's wife, his man and his maids ruſhed upon the ſtrollers all together, who received them with as good as they gave. This laſt encounter was more fierce and obſtinate than either of the other two. Deſtiny having cloſed with a luſty wench, and tucked up her ſmock, gave her a thouſand ſlaps on the buttocks; Olive, who ſaw the company pleaſed with it, did the ſame to the other maids. The inn-keeper was buſy with the poet; and the hoſteſs, the moſt furious of all the combatants, was ſeized by ſome of the ſpectators; which made her fly into ſuch a violent paſſion, that ſhe cried out thieves! thieves! Her cries awaked la Rappiniere, who lived over againſt the inn. He cauſed the door to be broke open; and judging by the noiſe he heard, there could be no leſs than ſeven or eight people killed, he parted the fray in the king's name; and having learnt the cauſe of all the diſturbance, exhorted the poet not to make any more verſes in the night-time, and went near to beating the inn-keeper and his wife, for

giving

giving a hundred abuſive names to the players, whom they called ſhew-men and tumblers, ſwearing alſo to turn them out of doors the next day; but la Rappiniere, to whom the inn-keeper owed money, threatening to arreſt him, his mouth was ſtopped in a moment. La Rappiniere, after the fray, went home, the reſt returned to their chambers, and Deſtiny to that of the players, where Cave deſired him not to defer any longer relating the hiſtory of his, and his ſiſter's adventures. He told her, he was ready to ſatisfy her curioſity, and began his relation as you ſhall find in the following chapter.

CHAP. XIII.

The hiſtory of Deſtiny and Stella.

I Was born in a village near Paris, and might make you believe I came of a very illuſtrious family, ſince no body can diſprove what a ſtranger ſays of himſelf; I am too generous, and too much a lover of truth, to deny the meanneſs of my extraction. My father was one of the moſt topping and ſubſtantial men in his village: I have often heard him ſay, that he

was a poor gentleman's ſon; that he had ſpent his youth in the wars; having got nothing but dry blows and empty pockets, he betook himſelf to the ſervice of a very rich Pariſian lady, in the quality of her gentleman uſher; that having ſcraped together a ſum of money in this place, (becauſe he was alſo ſteward and caterer of the houſe, and had the knack of emptying his miſtreſs's purſe to fill his own pokets) he married an old waiting-woman of the family, who died ſoon after, and left him all ſhe had got in her ſervice, Being ſoon weary of the condition of a widower, and no leſs that of a ſervant, he married a country-woman, who furniſhed his lady's houſe with bread: and it is to this laſt marriage that I owe my birth. My father was called Gariquet; what country he was of, I could never yet learn; and as for my mother's name, it ſignifies nothing to my ſtory. Let it ſuffice, that ſhe was as covetous as my father, and my father as covetous as ſhe, and that they had both a pretty large conſcience. My father had the honour of being the inventor of the piece of fleſh tied with a ſtring to the pot-handle, which having boiled a conſiderable time, may be taken out again, and ſerve ſeveral times

times to make ſoup. I could tell an hundred more particulars of his good huſbandry, which gained him, with juſtice, the reputation of a man of wit and invention; but for fear of being too tedious, I will content myſelf with relating only two, which may ſeem incredible, though they are moſt certainly true. He had bought up a great quantity of corn, with a deſign to ſell it very dear, in caſe the year ſhould prove bad; but the harveſt being plentiful, and corn falling in its price, he was ſo poſſeſſed with deſpair, and the devil, that he had an inclination to hang himſelf. One of his neighbours, who happened to be in the room when he entered upon that noble deſign, and had hid herſelf for fear of being ſeen, was not a little ſurprized, when ſhe ſaw him dangling from one of the joiſts of the cieling. She immediately ran to him, to cut the rope; and, by the help of my mother, who came in at her crying, got it from his neck: perhaps they repented the doing of ſo good an action, for he beat them both the ſame day, and made the poor woman pay for the rope ſhe had cut, by ſtopping ſome money he owed her. His other prank is no leſs ſtrange: he grudged himſelf what ever he eat, and

his wife being brought to bed of a boy, the fancy took him, that ſhe had milk enough to nouriſh both her ſon and himſelf; and hoped, that by ſucking his wife he ſhould ſave bread, and live upon a food of eaſy digeſtion. My mother's wit was much inferior to his, though her avarice was as great; however, though ſhe did not invent things as my father did, yet having once conceived them, ſhe put them in execution with more exactneſs than he. She therefore tried to nouriſh both her ſon and huſband with her own milk, and ventured alſo to feed upon it herſelf, with ſo much obſtinacy, that the little innocent creature was ſoon ſtarved to death; and my father and mother were ſo weakned, and famiſhed, that when they returned to meat, they ſurfeited themſelves and fell both ſick upon it. Some time after my mother went with child of me, and having happily brought forth a moſt unhappy creature, my father went to Paris, to deſire his miſtreſs to ſtand godmother to his ſon, together with an honeſt churchman, reſiding at his village, where he had a benefice. As he was returning home in the evening, to avoid the heat of the day, and paſſed through a great ſtreet in the ſuburbs, the houſes whereof were for the moſt

moſt part then, building, he ſaw afar off by the moon-ſhine, ſomewhat that glittered in his eyes, as he was croſſing the ſtreet. He did not think it worth while to enquire what it was; but hearing the groans of one in pain, at the ſame place where what he had ſeen vaniſhed out of his ſight, he boldly entered one of thoſe unfiniſhed buildings, where he found a woman ſiting alone on the ground. The place ſhe was in, received ſufficient light from the moon, to let my father perceive that ſhe was very young, and very richly dreſt, having on a gown of ſilver tiſſue, which was the glittering thing my father ſaw the moment before. You muſt not queſtion that my father, who did not want reſolution, was leſs ſurprized than the young lady; for ſhe was in a condition, that nothing worſe could happen to her. This conſideration gave her the aſſurance to ſpeak firſt and tell my father, that if he was a Chriſtian, he ſhould take pity on her; that ſhe was in labour, ready to be brought to bed, and that the maid ſhe had ſent for a truſty mid-wife, not returning, ſhe had ſlipped away from her houſe without waking any body, her maid having left the door open, that ſhe might come in again without making any noiſe. She

had ſcarce made an end of this relation, when ſhe was delivered of a child which my father received into the lappet of his cloak. He acted the midwife as well as he could, and the young lady conjured him to carry away the little creature with all ſpeed, to take care of it: and not to fail two days after, to go to an old churchman ſhe named to him, who would give him money, and all neceſſary orders for nurſing the child. At this word money, my father, who had a penurious ſoul, was going to diſplay all the eloquence of a gentleman uſher, but ſhe would not give him time; ſhe put into his hands a ring, as a token to the prieſt he was to go to from her; ſhe cauſed him to ſwaddle the young creature in her handkerchief, and ſent him away in haſte, notwithſtanding his unwillingneſs to leave her in that condition. I am inclined to believe, ſhe had much trouble to get home again. As for my father, he returned to his village, gave the child to his wife, and did not fail, two days after, of going to the old prieſt, and ſhewing him the ring. He learnt from him, that the child's mother was a young lady of a very good family, and very rich; that ſhe had this child by a Scotch lord, who was gone into Ireland

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to raiſe ſoldiers for the king's ſervice; and that this foreign nobleman had promiſed her marriage. The prieſt alſo told him, that by reaſon of her precipitate delivery, ſhe was fallen deſperately ſick; and being in that extremity, had confeſſed all to her father and mother; who inſtead of chiding endeavoured to comfort her, as ſhe was an only child: that the thing was as yet a ſecret in the houſe, and therefore ſhe aſſured my father, that if he would but take care of the child, and keep the ſecret, his fortune ſhould be made. Upon this he gave him fifty crowns, and a bundle of all ſorts of things neceſſary for a child. My father returned home after he had dined peaceably with the prieſt. I was put out to nurſe, and the ſtranger kept at home in my ſtead. A month after, the Scotch lord came back; and having found his miſtreſs ſo very ill, that ſhe could not live much longer, he married her one day before ſhe died, and ſo was no ſooner a huſband, than a widower. He came two or three days after to our town, with the parents of his wife. There they began to weep a freſh, and were like to ſtifle the child with kiſſes; my father had reaſon to be thankful to the Scotch lord for his generoſity, and the relations of the child

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did not forget him alſo. They returned to Paris very much ſatisfied with the care my father and mother took of the boy, whom they would not yet take home with them, becauſe the marriage was ſtill kept ſecret, for ſome reaſons which never came to my knowledge. As ſoon as I was able to walk, my father took me home, to keep the young earl of Glaris company (for after he was called by his father's title) The natural antipathy ſaid to be between Jacob and Eſau in the very womb of their mother, was never greater than that which was between the young earl and me. My father and mother loved him tenderly, and had an averſion for me, tho' I was the more hopeful boy of the two: there appeared nothing but what was mean in him. As for me, I ſeemed to be what I was not, and rather an earl's ſon than Gariquet's; and if am at laſt no more than a wretched player, it is undoubtedly, becauſe Fortune had a mind to be revenged upon Nature, for deſigning to make me ſomething without her help; or, if you pleaſe, becauſe Nature is ſometimes willing to favour thoſe whom Fortune is unkind to. I ſhall paſs over in ſilence, the infancy of two young clowns, (for Glaris was ſuch by education as well as myſelf) ſince our moſt memorable

ble adventures were nothing but a ſcene of continual contentions. In all the quarrels we had, I always got the better, except when my father and mother ſided with him, which they did ſo often, and with ſo much heat, that my godfather, Monſieur Saint Sauveur by name, was highly offended at it, and demanded me of my father. He made him a preſent of me with great joy, and my mother had yet leſs regret than he to part with me. Thus I was at my godfather's well clad, well fed, much careſſed, and never beaten. He ſpared no coſt to make me read and write; and as ſoon as I was fit to learn Latin, he obtained of the lord of our village, who was a very benevolent gentleman, and very rich, that I ſhould ſtudy with two of his ſons, under a learned man he had from Paris, and to whom he gave a very good ſalary. This gentleman, the baron d' Arques by name, took great care to have his ſons well educated. The eldeſt, called Saint Far, was a perſonable man, but as untractable rough and brutiſh in his nature, as ever man was. To make amends, the younger brother was both handſomer than Saint Far, and had a vivacity of mind, and greatneſs of ſoul equal to the beauty of his perſon. In ſhort, I

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do not think there ever was a more hopeful youth than Vervelle, for this was the younger brother's name. He honoured me with his friendſhip; and, as for me, I loved him as a brother, and reſpected him as a maſter. As for Saint Far, he had no other but ill inclinations; and I cannot better expreſs the ſentiments he had both for his brother and me, than by telling you, that he loved his brother as little as he did me. His diverſions were different from ours, for he liked nothing but hunting, and hated books; whereas Vervelle ſeldom went a hunting, and took great delight in reading: in this part of his diſpoſition, I agreed wonderfully with him, as I did in every thing elſe, without being put to the trouble of doing any thing out of complaiſance, as in duty I ought. The baron d' Arques had a large library of romances: our tutor, who had never read any in college, and who, at firſt, forbid us the reading of them, having condemned them a hundred times before the baron d' Arques, to render them as odious to him, as he found them delightful, grew at laſt ſo much in love with them himſelf, that having devoured both the old and new ones, he confeſt that the reading of good romances, was as inſtructive, as pleaſant,

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and no leſs proper to inſpire young people with noble ſentiments, than the reading of Plutarch. He therefore encouraged us to read them, as earneſtly as he had diſcouraged us before, and firſt of all adviſed us to peruſe the modern; but theſe were not yet ſuitable to our palates; and till we were fifteen, we were much more delighted with Amadis de Gaul, than any of the more faſhionable romances that have been made ſince; by which the French have ſhewn to the world, that if they do not invent ſo much as other nations, yet do they nevertheleſs bring the inventions of others to a far greater perfection. We therefore beſtowed upon the reading of romances, the greateſt part of the time we had allowed us for diverſion. As for Saint Far, he called us the philoſophers, and went abroad every day either to hunt, or beat the poor country fellows, which he did with wonderful ſucceſs. The inclination I had to do well, gained me the favour of the baron d' Arques, who loved me no leſs than if I had been his near relation. He would not ſuffer me to leave his ſons, when he ſent them to the academy, but ſent me with them, and that rather as a companion than a ſervant. There we ſtayed about two years to learn

our exerciſes; at the end of which, a man of quality related to the baron d' Arques, raiſing ſoldiers for the Venetians, Saint Far, and Vervelle perſuaded their father to let them go to Venice with their kindſman. The good old gentleman deſired I would ſtill accompany them, and monſ. de Saint Sauveur, my godfather, who loved me extremely, gave me very generouſly bills of exchange for a conſiderable ſum, to make uſe of, in caſe thoſe I had the honour to accompany ſhould be unwilling to bear my charges. We went the longeſt way about on purpoſe to ſee Rome, and the other fine cities of Italy, in each of which we ſtayed a conſiderable time. I fell ſick at Rome, and the two brothers proceeded on their journey; the gentleman under whoſe conduct they were, being deſirous to lay hold on the oportunity of the pope's gallies, which were puting out ſea to join the Venetian army, near the ſtreights of the Dardanels, where they waited for the Turks. Vervelle was extremely ſorry to leave me, and I almoſt mad to part from him, at a time, when by my ſervices I might, in ſome meaſure, have deſerved the love he had for me. As for Saint Far, I believe he left me with as much indifference

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as if he had never ſeen me; and I never thought on him, except as being brother to Vervelle, who left me as much money as he could ſpare; but whether Saint Far conſented to this generoſity, I cannot tell. Thus I was left ſick at Rome, having no other acquaintance except my landlord, a Flemiſh apothecary, who took great care of me during my illneſs, and who, as far as I can judge, had more ſkill in phyſic than the Italian doctor who aſſiſted. At laſt I recovered, and gathered ſtrength enough to go and view the moſt remarkable places in Rome, were ſtrangers find every where objects to entertain their curioſity. I took a ſingular delight in viewing the Vines, (thus are called ſeveral gardens, finer than the Tuilleries in Paris, which cardinals and other perſons of quality keep with much coſt in Rome, rather out of vanity than for their own entertainment, as they never, or, at leaſt, very ſeldom go there themſelves.) One day as I was walking in one of the fineſt, I ſaw, at the turning of the wall, two women very genteely dreſſed, whom two young Frenchmen ſtopped, and would not let go, unleſs the youngeſt unveiled her face. One of thoſe two Frenchmen, who looked like the maſter of the other, had

had even the inſolence to offer to unveil her by force, whilſt his man held the other, who was bare-faced. I was not long debating what I ſhould do on this occaſion, but preſently told thoſe rude men, that I was reſolved not to ſuffer them to offer violence to the ladies. They were both very much ſurprized, for I ſpoke with ſuch reſolution, as would have daunted them, even had they been armed as I was. The two ladies put themſelves under my protection, and the young Frenchman, chuſing rather to be baulked than beaten, told me as he went off, that, for all my hectoring, he ſhould meet me in ſome other place, where our ſwords ſhould decide the controverſy. I anſwered, I would not hide myſelf: his man followed him, and ſo I ſtayed with the two women. She that had no veil on, ſeemed to be about five and thirty: ſhe returned me thanks in good French, without any mixture of Italian, and told me amongſt other things, that if all Frenchmen were like me, the Italian women would not ſcruple to live after the French faſhion. After that, to reward the ſervice I had done them, ſhe added, that ſince I hindered the rude Frenchman from ſeeing her daughter againſt her will, it was reaſonable

ſonable I ſhould ſee her of her own accord; therefore, ſaid ſhe, Leonora, lift up your veil, and let the gentleman ſee that we are not altogether unworthy of the honour of being under his protection. She had ſcarce done ſpeaking, but her daughter put aſide her veil, or rather diſcovered a ſun which dazzled my eyes. I never beheld ſo beautiful an object in my whole life; ſhe caſt three or four times her eyes on me, as it were by ſtealth; and as they ſtill met with mine, the innocent bluſhes which overſpread her face, made her look, to me, as handſome as an angel. I perceived the mother was very fond of her, for ſhe ſeemed to ſhare the pleaſure I had in gazing upon her. Now, as I was little uſed to theſe adventures, and as young people are eaſily put out of countenance in ſtrange company, I made them but an indifferent compliment when they went away, and gave them, perhaps, but an indifferent opinion of my underſtanding; I was angry with myſelf for not aſking their addreſs, and that I did not offer to wait upon them thither; but as it would be prepoſterous to run after them, I went to the door-keeper to enquire whether he knew them; who at laſt, rather by ſigns than otherwiſe, gave me

to underſtand, that they were unknown to him, at leaſt he would not own that he knew them. I returned to my Flemiſh apothecary, in a very different diſpoſition of mind from what I was in when I came out; that is to ſay, very amorous, and very much in pain to know whether my beautiful Leonora was a courtezan or a woman of reputation; and if ſhe had as much good ſenſe as her mother, who ſeemed to have a great deal. I abandoned myſelf to thought, and flattered myſelf with a thouſand hopes, which entertained me a while, but diſquieted me much more, when I conſidered the impoſſibility of my wiſhes. Having framed a thouſand frivolous deſigns, I reſolved at laſt to ſeek them out, not thinking it poſſible for them to remain long inviſible in Rome, (which is not a populous city,) eſpecially to a man ſo much in love as I was. That very day I looked for them wherever I thought it moſt likely to find them, and returned home at night, more tired and uneaſy than I was when I went out. The next day I ſought them with ſtill more diligence, yet did nothing but tire and diſquiet myſelf. By my peeping through the lattice-windows, and my haſty running after all the women that bore the leaſt

leaſt reſemblance of my Leonora, I was taken a hundred times, both in the ſtreets and in the churches, for the greateſt fool among thoſe Frenchmen who have contributed moſt to make Frenchmen ridiculous. It is matter of wonder, how I could gather ſtrength at a time, when I ſuffered ſo much from ſickneſs: however, my body recovered, whilſt my ſick mind remained ſo divided betwixt honour and love, which kept me at Rome, that I often doubted whether I ſhould obey the frequent letters I received from Verville, who conjured me by the ties of friendſhip, to come to him, without uſing the rights he had to command me. At laſt, all my endeavours to find out my unknown lady, proving ineffectual, I paid my landlord, and got my little equipage ready, in order to depart. The day before I was to ſet out, ſignior Stephano Vanberge (for ſo was my landlord called) told me, he deſigned to give me a dinner at a miſtreſs's houſe of his, and at the ſame time make me confeſs, that he had not made an ill choice for a Fleming; adding withal, that he would not carry me to her before I was to go away, becauſe he was a little jealous. I promiſed to wait on him, rather out of complaiſance than

than inclination; and accordingly he went about dinner-time. The houſe he went into had neither the appearance nor furniture of an apothecary's miſtreſs. Having traverſed a very fine parlour, we entered a magnificent room, where we were received by Leonora and her mother. You may imagine how much I was agreeably ſurprized. The mother of that beautiful daughter came towards me, to be ſaluted after the French way; and I muſt own, that ſhe kiſſed me, rather than I her: I was ſo amazed, that I could ſcarce ſee, neither did I hear one word of the compliment ſhe made me. At laſt I recovered both my ſenſes and ſight, and ſaw my Leonora herſelf more beautiful and charming than before, but had not the aſſurance to ſalute her. I was ſenſible of my fault as ſoon I had committed it; but inſtead of repairing it, bluſhed as much out of ſhame, as ſhe did out of modeſty. Her mother told me, ſhe deſigned to return me thanks before I went away, for the pains I had taken to find out their habitation; and this ſtill increaſed my confuſion. She brought me into a private room adorned after the French faſhion, where her daughter did not follow us, becauſe, I ſuppoſe, ſhe did not think it worth

worth her while to join converſation with ſo dull a fellow as I ſeemed to be. She ſtayed with ſignior Stephano, whilſt, with her mother, I acted the part of a clown to the life. She was ſo civil, as to keep up the converſation by herſelf; which ſhe did very ingeniouſly; though nothing can be more difficult, than to ſhew one's wit with thoſe that have none. For my part, I never was ſuch a blockhead in my life; and if ſhe was not tired of my company, ſhe never could be ſo with any company whatſoever. Amongſt other things, to which I ſcarce anſwered, yes, or no, ſhe told me ſhe was a French woman, and that ſignior Stephano would inform me of the reaſons which kept her at Rome. By this time, dinner being ready, ſhe was obliged to lead me along to the table; for I was ſo diſordered, that I did not know how to ſet one foot before the other. I was the ſame dull fellow both before and after dinner; during which, the only thing I did with aſſurance, was to ſtare upon Leonora. I fancy ſhe was uneaſy at it, and therefore to puniſh me for it, never lifted up her eyes all the while. Had the mother been ſilent, the dinner had been like a Carthuſian meal; but ſhe diſcourſed with ſignior Stephano about the affairs of

Rome, at leaſt I fancy ſo, for I am not very ſure of it to this hour. At laſt we roſe from table, to the great comfort of every body, except myſelf, whoſe diſtemper grew worſe and worſe every moment. When we went to take our leaves, they ſaid a thouſand obliging things to me, which I only anſwered with the ordinary compliments uſed at the bottom of a letter: however, I did ſomething more at parting than I did when I came in, for I ſaluted Leonora, and by that means compleated my ruin. Stephano was not able to get one ſingle word from me all our way home. I locked myſelf up in my room, without pulling off either my cloak or ſword. There I revolved in my mind what had happened to me. Leonora preſented herſelf to my fancy, more beautiful than ever ſhe had appeared in my ſight. I remembered how dull and ſilent I was before the mother and daughter; and as often as I thought on it, was ſo aſhamed, that I could not forbear bluſhing. I wiſhed to be rich, curſed my mean extraction; and then fancied to myſelf, a thouſand lucky adventures, advantageous both to my fortune and love. At laſt, having nothing in my thoughts but how to frame a plauſible pretence to ſtay, and

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not finding any to my liking, I grew ſo deſperate, as to wiſh to fall ſick again, to which I had already no ſmall diſpoſition. I deſigned to write to Leonora; but all my pen could produce did not pleaſe me, and ſo I put into my pocket the beginning of a letter, which perhaps I had not dared to ſend, had it been finiſhed. Thus, having diſquieted myſelf to little purpoſe, and not being able to baniſh Leonora from my thoughts, I reſolved to go by the garden where ſhe appeared to me at firſt, to abandon myſelf entirely to my paſſion, and paſs by her door to take a final farewell. The garden was well ſituated in one of the remoteſt parts of the city, and in the midſt of ſeveral old uninhabited buildings. As I paſſed along, penſive and melancholy under the ruins of a portico, I heard ſomebody ſtalk behind me, and at the ſame time felt myſelf run through the body. I preſently faced about, and inſtantly drew my ſword; and finding I had to do with the ſervant of the young Frenchman I mentioned before, I was like to return him at leaſt as good a paſs as he had made at me by treachery: but as I puſhed at him without being able to cloſe with him, becauſe he maintained a running fight, and en-

deavoured to parry, his maſter came out from among the ruins of the portico, and attacking me behind, dealt me ſuch a ſtunning blow on the head, and a great thruſt in the thigh, as made me fall to the ground. There was no likelihood of my eſcaping at ſo cheap a rate, but becauſe in an ill action people ſeldom preſerve a preſence of mind, the ſervant wounded his maſter in the right hand; and at the ſame time two Minim friars of the Trinity of the mount paſſing by, and ſeeing me treacherouſly aſſaulted, ran to my aſſiſtance; whereupon the aſſaſſins made their eſcape, and left me wounded in three ſeveral places. Thoſe good friars happened to be Frenchmen, to my great comfort; for, in ſo remote a place, had an Italian ſeen me in the condition I was in, he would rather have avoided than ſuccoured me, leſt being found doing me a good office, he ſhould be ſuſpected of being himſelf my murtherer. Whilſt one of theſe charitable friars received my confeſſion, the other ran to my lodging, to acquaint my landlord with my diſaſter: he came inſtantly to me, and cauſed me to be carried, half dead, to my bed. With ſo many wounds, and ſo much love, it was no wonder if I ſoon fell into a moſt violent

violent fever. My life was deſpaired of by all, and I had no reaſon to hope its continuance. In the mean time, my paſſion for Leonora was ſo far from abating, that it was rather increaſed, though my ſtrength grew ſtill weaker and weaker. Wherefore, not being able to ſupport ſo heavy a burthen, and yet reſolved not to die, without letting Leonora know, that it was for her ſake only that I wiſhed to live, I called for a pen and ink. They thought I was light-headed; but I was ſo earneſt in proteſting that they would drive me into deſpair in caſe they ſhould deny me what I requeſted, that ſignior Stephano, who had taken notice of my paſſion, and was ſo clear ſighted as to gueſs at my deſign, gave orders that I ſhould have all things neceſſary to write; and as he knew my intention, he ſtayed all alone in the room. I peruſed what I had ſcribbled a little before with deſign to make uſe of ſome thoughts which came then into my head upon the ſame ſubject, and then wrote thus to Leonora.

"I no ſooner ſaw you, but it was out of my power to forbear loving you; my reaſon did not oppoſe my paſſion, but told me, as well as my eyes, that you was the

moſt lovely perſon in the world; whereas it ſhould have repreſented to me, how unworthy I was of your heart. However, that would have ſerved only to exaſperate my diſeaſe with unprofitable remedies; and after having ſtruggled awhile, I muſt at laſt have yielded to the irreſiſtable neceſſity of loving you, which you impoſe on all that ſee you. I love you, my charming Leonora; but with ſo much reſpect, that you ought not to hate me for it, although I have the boldneſs to diſcover it to you: but how is it poſſible to die for you, without boaſting of it? and how can you refuſe to pardon a crime, with which you cannot reproach me long? I own your being the cauſe of a man's death is a recompence not to be merited, but by a great number of ſervices; and you will, perhaps, envy me an happineſs, which you procured me without deſign. But do not grudge it me, lovely Leonora, ſince it is no more in your power to make me loſe it, and that it is the only favour I ever received from fortune, who will never ſufficiently reward your merit, but by procuring you adorers as much above me, as all other beauties in the world are below you. Therefore, I am not ſo vain as to think that you will beſtow the leaſt ſentiment of pity on—"

I was not able to make an end of my letter; my ſtrength failed me on the ſudden, and the pen fell from my hand, for my mind went ſo faſt, that my body could not keep peace with it; elſe that long beginning you have heard, had been but a ſmall part of my letter; ſo much was my imagination warmed by my fever and my love. I was a long time in a fainting fit, without giving the leaſt ſign of life; which ſignior Stephano perceiving, he opened the chamber-door to ſend for a prieſt. At that very moment Leonora and her mother came to viſit me, having, it ſeems, been informed of my being wounded. Now, as they thought this accident befel me upon their accounts, and for that reaſon that they were the innocent cauſe of my death, they did not ſcruple to come to ſee me in the condition I was in. My trance laſted ſo long, that they went away before I was come to myſelf, very much afflicted, as one may imagine, and fully perſuaded, that I would never recover. They read what I had been writing; and the mother being more curious than the daughter, peruſed alſo the papers I had left on the bed; amongſt which there was a letter from my father. I was a long time ſtrug-

gling betwixt life and death; but at length youth getting the upper-hand, in a fortnight's time I was out of danger; and in five week's time began to walk about the room. My landlord entertained me often about Leonora. He acquainted me with the charitable viſit ſhe and her mother had made me; at which I was over-joyed: and if I was a little troubled at their reading my father's letter, I was highly pleaſed that my own had been read alſo. As often as I happened to be alone with Stephano, I could talk of nothing but Leonora. One day, calling to mind what her mother told me, that he could inform me who ſhe was, and what reaſons obliged her to ſtay in Rome, I deſired him to acquaint me with what he knew of the matter. He acquainted me, that ſhe came to Rome with the French ambaſſador's lady; that a man of quality, a near relation of the ambaſſador's, had fallen in love with her; that after a time ſhe loved him too, and that being married clandeſtinely, ſhe had the beautiful Leonora by him: he informed me likewiſe, that that nobleman had fallen out with all his relations upon this account, which obliged him to leave Rome and go to Venice with madame la Boiſſiere

Boiſſiere (for this was her name) till the time of the ambaſſy ſhould be expired; that having brought her back to Rome, he furniſhed her a houſe, and gave her all neceſſaries to live like a perſon of quality, whilſt he ſtayed in France, whither his father had called him back, and whither he durſt not carry his miſtreſs, or, if you pleaſe, his wife; well knowing, that none of his relations would approve his match. I muſt confeſs, I could not ſometimes forbear wiſhing, that Leonora was not the legitimate daughter of a perſon of quality, that the blemiſh of her birth might excuſe the meanneſs of mine; but however, I ſoon repented ſo criminal a thought, and wiſhed her fortune anſwerable to her merit. This laſt thought caſt me into deſpair; for as I loved her more than my life, I plainly foreſaw, that I could never be happy without enjoying her, nor enjoy her without making her unhappy. When I began to recover, and that there was no other remains of my diſtemper, than a great paleneſs in my cheeks, occaſioned by the vaſt quantity of blood I had loſt, my young maſters returned from the Venetian army, the plague which infected all the Levant, not ſuffering them to ſignalize their courage there any longer.

Verville had ſtill the ſame affection he ever had for me, and Saint Far did not yet ſhew he hated me, as he has done ſince. I recounted to them all my adventures, except my falling in love with Leonora; both expreſſed a great deſire of being acquainted with her, which my exaggerating the merit both of the mother and the daughter encreaſed. A man ought never to commend the perſon he loves, before thoſe who may love her alſo, ſince love enters at the ears as well as the eyes. This folly has often been pernicious to thoſe who have been guilty of it, which my own experience will juſtify, as you ſhall ſhortly ſee. Saint Far aſked me every day when I deſigned to carry him to madame la Boiſſiere: one day, when he was more preſſing than ordinary, I anſwered, I could not tell whether ſhe would admit of his viſit or not, becauſe ſhe lived very retired; nay, replied he, I now plainly ſee you are in love with her daughter; and added, he knew how to go ſee her without me, after a very blunt manner. I was ſo daunted, that he then firmly believed, what he barely ſuſpected before. Afterwards he paſſed an hundred ſilly jeſts upon me, and put me ſo out of countenance, that Verville pitied me. He took

took me away from his unmannerly brother, and carried me to the Corſo, where I was extremely melancholly, though Verville, out of a kindneſs extraordinary in a perſon of his age, and ſo much above me by birth, uſed all poſſible means to divert me. In the mean time, the ill-natured Saint Far, endeavoured to ſatisfy himſelf, or rather ruin me. He went ſtrait to madame la Boiſſiere; where they took him at firſt for me, becauſe he had my landlord's ſervant with him, who had often accompanied me thither; but had it not been for that, I believe he had never been admitted. Madame la Boiſſiere was very much ſurprized to ſee a man ſhe did not know: ſhe told Saint Far, ſhe could not imagine upon what ſcore, a ſtranger did her the honour of a viſit. Saint Far replied very humbly, that he was the maſter of a young fellow, who was ſo happy as to be wounded in her ſervice.

Having begun his compliment with an account, which, as I was informed ſince, pleaſed neither the mother nor daughter; and theſe two ingenious perſons, being unwilling to hazard the reputation of their wit, with a perſon, who at once diſcovered he had little, the rude impertinent

was meanly diverted by them, and they very much tired with him. But what made him almoſt mad, was, his being denied the ſatisfaction of ſeeing Leonora's face, though he had begged her a thouſand times to lift up the veil ſhe commonly wore, as all unmarried ladies do at Rome. At laſt this accompliſhed courtier being tired with tiring of them, rid them of his troubleſome viſit, and returned to ſignior Stephano's with little advantage from the ill office he had done me. Ever ſince that time, as it is ordinary with ill-natured perſons to hate thoſe whom they have injured, he deſpiſed me to that degree, and diſobliged me ſo often, that I had a hundred times forgot the reſpect I owed to his quality, if Verville, by his conſtant friendſhip, and repeated kindneſſes, had not made me amends for his brother's brutality. I was not yet acquainted with the ill office he had done me, though I often felt the effects of it; I found, indeed, madame la Boiſſiere more reſerved to me, than when we were firſt acquainted; but being ſtill as civil as before, I did not take notice of my being troubleſome. As for Leonora, ſhe appeared very thoughtful before her mother; but when not obſerved by her, methought

methought ſhe was not ſo melancholly, and caſt on me more favourable looks than I could have expected.

Deſtiny was thus relating his ſtory, and the actreſſes liſtening very attentively, without ſhewing the leaſt inclination to ſleep, when they heard the clock ſtrike two. Mrs. Cave put Deſtiny in mind, that the next day he was to accompany monſieur la Rappiniere to a houſe about two or three leagues out of town, where he promiſed to give them the diverſion of hunting. This made Deſtiny take his leave of the players, and retire to his own chamber, where in all probability he went to bed: the other players did the ſame, and the remaining part of the night was ſpent in quiet; the poet, as luck would have it, having made no new ſtanzas to diſturb the general repoſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

How the curate of Domfront was carried away.

THOSE who have had ſo much ſpare time to throw away upon the reading of the foregoing chapters, may remember, if they have not forgot it, that the curate of Domfront was in one of thoſe litters, which met four in a company in a little village, by an accident which perhaps had never happened before; though every one knows four litters may ſooner meet together than four mountains. This curate then, who lodged in the ſame inn where our players quartered, having had a conſultation of the phyſicians of Mans about his diſeaſe, and being told by thoſe grave doctors in very elegant Latin, that he was troubled with the gravel, which the poor man knew but too well before; and likewiſe having diſpatched ſome buſineſs which never came to my knowledge: this good prieſt, I ſay, having done all this, ſet out from that inn about nine o'clock in the morning, to return to the ſpiritual conduct of his flock. One of his nieces, dreſſed like

a

a gentlewoman, but whether ſhe was ſo or not, ſignifies little, placed herſelf at the fore part of the litter, at the good man's feet, who was very thick and ſhort. A peaſant, by name William, led the fore-horſe by the bridle, by ſpecial order from the curate, for fear he ſhould ſtumble; and the curate's ſervant, one Julian, took care to drive the hinder; which was however ſo reſtive, that he was often obliged to puſh him forward with his ſhoulders. The curate's chamber-pot, which was of yellow braſs, and glittered like gold, having been newly ſcoured in the inn, hung on the right ſide of the litter, which made it look more magnificent than the left, which was only adorned with a hat in a paſteboard caſe, which the curate had received from the Paris meſſenger, for a gentleman of his acquaintance, who had a houſe near Domfront. About a league and a half from the town, while the litter jogged leiſurely on in a hollow way, fenced on both ſides with thick hedges, as ſtrong as walls, three horſemen, ſeconded by two men on foot, ſtopped the venerable caravan. One of them, who ſeemed to be captain of the reſt, with a moſt terrible voice cried, Death and furies, the firſt man thar offers

to

to ſpeak a word, I'll ſhoot him through the head; and with that clapped the muzzle of his piſtol within two inches of William, the country-fellow's noſe, who led the horſe litter. Another did the like to Julian, and one of the foot-pads levelled his gun at the curate's neck, while he ſlept very quietly in the litter; by which means he was freed from the terrible fright that had ſeized his little peaceful retinue. Theſe villians drove the litter with more haſte than the dull horſes that carried it were willing to make. Never was ſilence better obſerved in ſo violent an action: the curate's niece was more dead than alive; William and Julian wept, without daring ſo much as to open their mouths, daunted by the terrible apparition of fire-arms; and the curate ſlept on, as I ſaid before. One of the horſemen detached himſelf from the main body, and went on full gallop. In the mean time the litter reached a wood, at the entrance of which, the fore horſe, which perhaps was as much frighted as his leaders, or elſe out of ſpite, becauſe they had forced him to go a quicker pace than his dull and heavy conſtitution would permit him, put his foot into a wheel-track; where he fell a flouncing ſo fiercely,

fiercely, that the curate waked at the noiſe; and his niece tumbled down from the litter on the lean buttocks of the jade. The good man called Julian, who durſt not ſo much as anſwer him; he then called his niece, who was not ſuch a fool as to open her mouth; and the peaſant being as hard-hearted as the reſt, the curate fell into a paſſion in good earneſt. Some relate he ſwore an oath, but I can hardly believe ſuch a thing of a curate of Lower Mayne. The curate's niece had by this time raiſed herſelf up again from the horſe's buttocks, and ſat in her place, without daring to look on her uncle; and the horſe having, with great vigour, diſengaged his feet, went on faſter than ever he did, notwithſtanding the curate's ſcreaming out ſtop. His repeated cries ſcared the horſes, which ran ſtill the faſter, and made the curate cry out ſtill the louder. Sometimes he called Julian, ſometimes William, and oftener than the reſt his niece, to whoſe name he added the epithet of double whore and bitch into the bargain. However, ſhe might have ſpoke if ſhe had been willing; for the man who made her obſerve ſo religious a ſilence, was gone to meet the horſemen who rode before,

about

about forty or fifty yards from the litter. But the fear of the carabine, made her inſenſible of her uncle's hard words; who ſeeing himſelf ſo obſtinately diſobey'd, began at laſt to howl and cry out, help, murther. And now the horſemen who rode before, and whom the footmen had called back, came to the litter, and made it ſtop; when one of them cried out in a terrible voice to William, What fool is that, that makes ſuch a noiſe in the litter? Alas, ſir, anſwered William, with fear and trembling, you know that better than I. The horſeman gave him a ſound knock on the pate with the but end of his piſtol, and preſenting the muzzle to his niece, commanded her to unmaſk, and tell her who ſhe was. The curate, who from his litter beheld all this, and who had a law-ſuit with a gentleman in his neighbourhood, de Laune, by name, thought it was he that had a mind to murther him—and cried out, Monſieur de Laune, I ſummon you before God Almighty, to anſwer for my murther if you kill me: I am a conſecrated prieſt, though an unworthy one, and I'll have you excommunicated. In the mean time his niece pulled off her maſk, and ſhewed the horſeman a wild ſtaring face, which

he

he did not know. This produced an unexpected effect. That paſſionate gentleman diſcharged one of his piſtols into the flank of the horſe that carried the fore part of the litter, and with the other ſhot one of his footmen in the head; ſaying, let all that give falſe intelligence have that for their pains. And now it was, that the curate and his retinue's fears began to redouble: he demanded their confeſſion. Julian and William fell on their knees, and the curate's niece kept cloſe to her uncle. But thoſe who put them in that terrible fright, were already gone from them, and made the beſt of their way, as faſt as their horſes could drive, leaving to their charge the body of the fellow that was ſhot. Julian and William got up, ſtill ſhaking with the remains of their fears, and told the curate and his niece, that the troopers were gone. They were obliged to unharneſs the hindermoſt horſe, to ſet the litter upright; and William was ſent to the next town to get another horſe. In the mean time the curate was at a loſs, what to think of theſe accidents: he could not imagine, why they left him without robbing him; nor, for what reaſon the horſeman had killed one of his own men; at which,

however,

however, he was not ſo much offended as at the loſs of his poor murthered horſe, which, in all probability, had never quarrelled with that ſtranger. Upon the whole matter, he concluded that it was de Laune, who had deſigned to murther him, and ſaid, he would have his revenge. His niece maintained, that it was not de Laune, whom ſhe knew very well; but the curate had a mind it ſhould be him, that he might have an opportunity of inditing him for an aſſault, hoping to get him condemned upon the depoſition of ſome witneſſes, whom he expected to find at Goron, where he had many relations. At length Julian eſpying another company of men on horſeback making towards them, betook himſelf to his heels as faſt as he could. The curate's niece ſeeing Julian upon the flight, thought he had ſome reaſon for it, and therefore ſcampered away alſo; which put the curate entirely beſide himſelf, not knowing what to make of ſo many extrordinary accidents. At laſt, he himſelf, eſpied the horſemen whom Julian had ſeen before; and, ſtill worſe, ſaw them coming directly towards him. This troop was compoſed of nine or ten horſemen, in the midſt of whom was a wretch bound hand and foot, on a little

little ſorry horſe, with a pale downcaſt look, like one that was carrying to execution. The curate began to ſay his prayers, recommending himſelf to God's mercy, and not forgetting the horſe that was left alive: but he was very much ſurpriſed, and comforted at the ſame time, to find that it was la Rappiniere with ſome of his men. La Rappiniere aſking him what he did there, and whether it was he that had killed the man that lay dead near the horſe's ſide, the curate told him the whole adventure, ſtill affirming, that it was de Laune that had way-laid him, of which la Rappiniere made a verbal proceſs at large. One of his archers went to the next village, to get the dead body removed, and returned with the curate's niece and Julian, who by this time had recovered their fright, and had met William with a freſh horſe for the litter. The curate returned ſafe to Domfront, where, as long as he lives, he will relate how he was ſet upon, and carried away. The dead horſe was eaten up by the wolves, or maſtiff dogs; the body of the dead man was buried I know not where; and la Rappiniere, Deſtiny, Rancour Olive, la Rappiniere's mirmidons, and the priſoner, went back to Mans. This is

is the ſucceſs of la Rappiniere and the ſtrollers hunting, who caught a man inſtead of a fox.

CHAP. XV.

A Charlatan's arrival at the inn. A continuation of the hiſtory of Deſtiny and Stella. A ſerenade.

YOU may be pleaſed to remember, that in the foregoing chapter, one of thoſe that ſet upon the curate of Domfront, left his companions, and went full gallop we know not whither. Now, as he was ſpurring on in a deep and narrow way, he eſpied, afar off, ſome men on horſeback, making directly towards him; he would have wheeled about to ſhun them, but turning too ſhort, and with more haſte than good ſpeed, his horſe ſprung up ſo ſuddenly, that he fell down backwards with the rider under him. La Rappiniere and his fellows obſerving this, thought it was very ſtrange, that a man who came in ſuch haſte towards them, ſhould endeavour to avoid them with the like ſpeed. It gave them therefore juſt cauſe of ſuſpicion, eſpecially la Rappiniere, who

who was very ſuſceptible in his own nature; beſides, his office obliging him to make the worſt interpretation of things in dubious caſes, his ſuſpicion encreaſed to a high degree, when he came near the man who had one leg under the horſe, for he took notice that he was not ſo much terrified at his fall, as at the perſon before whom he fell. Now conſidering it could be no prejudice to him to aggravate his fright, and knowing how to diſcharge his office, as well as any provoſt in France, he drew near, and ſaid to him, What! you are caught, my friend are you? Well, I'll take care you ſhall not get ſuch another fall. This amazed the poor fellow much more than the fall had done; when la Rappiniere and his harpies ſaw in his countenance ſuch viſible ſigns of guilt, that any other officer leſs forward than he would have arreſted him without any more ado: he therefore commanded his men to help him up, and bind him hand and foot on his own horſe. He ſoon afterwards met the curate of Domfront in the diſorder you have read of, with a man murthered, and a horſe ſhot through, which confirmed him ſtill more in his ſuſpicions, to which the priſoner's great diſorder and change of colour, was no ſmall addition. Deſtiny ſurveyed

veyed him more earneſtly than the reſt, imagining he knew him, tho' where he had ſeen him he could not perfectly call to mind. He went on ruminating all the way he rode, and ſtrove to awake his drowſy memory; yet could not remember where he had ſeen this ſuſpected perſon. At length they arrived at Mans, where la Rappinere committed the ſuppoſed malefactor to priſon, whilſt the ſtrollers who were to open their ſtage the day following, retired to their inn, to get all things in readineſs for that purpoſe. They were reconciled to the innkeeper; and the poet, who was as generous as any poet in the world, would needs treat them to a ſupper. Ragotin, who was then in the inn, for he could not refrain from going there, ever ſince he had been ſmitten with the beauties of Stella, was invited by the poet amongſt the reſt; this poor poet was even ſo much a fool, as to invite alſo thoſe that had been ſpectators of the combat, which had been fought the night before betwixt the players and the innkeeper's family, in their ſhirts and ſmocks. A little before ſupper began, the jolly company was farther encreaſed by the arrival of a Charlatan and his retinue; which conſiſted of his wife, an old negroe maid, a monkey

key, and two footmen. Rancour had an acquaintance with the perſonage of a long ſtanding, and therefore there paſt great civilities between them: nor would the poet, who was eaſily acquainted with people, part with him or his wife, before he had prevailed upon them, by many high compliments, which ſounded loud, and ſignified little, only to come and honour him with their preſence at ſupper. Well, ſup they did, where nothing happened that was remarkable, only they drank plentifully, and eat proportionably. Ragotin fed his eyes on Stella's face, which intoxicated him more than the liquor he ſwallowed. He ſpoke but very ſparingly all the while they were at table, tho' the poet gave him a fair opportunity of wrangling, flatly condemning Theophile's verſes, of whom Ragotin was a great admirer. The actreſſes engaged a while with the operator's wife, a Spaniſh woman, and very agreeable. They afterwards withdrew into their chamber, whither Deſtiny waited on them, to continue and end his ſtory; which Cave and her daughter died with impatience to hear. Stella in the mean time was ſtudying her part, when Deſtiny having taken a chair near the bedſide, whereon Cave and her daughter ſat,

went on with his hiſtory after the following manner.

Hitherto you have found me very amorous, and much in pain, to know what effect my letter had wrought on Leonora and her mother's minds; you ſhall find me more in love yet, and in the greateſt deſpair. I waited every day on madam la Boiſſiere and her daughter, ſo blinded with paſſion, that I did not take notice of the coldneſs of their reception, nor did I conſider that my too frequent viſits became importunate. Madame la Boiſſiere was weary of my company, ever ſince Saint Far acquainted her who I was: yet ſhe could not civily forbid me the houſe, after what I had ſuffered on her account. As for her daughter, if I might judge by what ſhe did ſince, I may ſay ſhe pitied me, though contrary to her mother's will, who kept ſo watchful an eye over her, that we could never have an opportunity of meeting in private. To ſpeak the truth, though this fair virgin was much leſs cold to me than her mother, yet durſt not ſhe ſhew me the leaſt token of her favour before her mother; ſo that I was on the rack, and my aſſiduity ſerved only to make me the more hateful to thoſe whom I deſigned to pleaſe. One day madame

madame Boiſſiere having received letters from France, which obliged her to go abroad as ſoon as ſhe had read the contents of them, ſhe ſent immediately for a coach, and ſignior Stephano to accompany her, not daring to go alone after the unlucky rencounter, wherein I had engaged on her account. I was myſelf nearer at hand, and more fit to be her attendant, than the gentleman ſhe had ſent for; however, ſhe would not accept of the leaſt ſervice from a perſon, whom ſhe intended ſpeedily to be rid of. As luck would have it, Stephano was not to be found; ſo that ſhe was compelled to ſhew before me, how uneaſy ſhe was, that ſhe had nobody to go with her, that I might have an opportunity to offer myſelf; which I did with as much joy, as ſhe could have regret to be obliged to take me along with her. I conducted her to a certain cardinal, who was then protector of the French, and who by good fortune gave her audience upon the firſt motion ſhe made. The buſineſs was doubtleſs of great importance, and no ſmall difficulty; for ſhe was a long time with him in a private grotto, or covered fountain, in the midſt of a fine garden, whilſt all the cardinal's followers walked

into thoſe parts of the garden they liked moſt. Now was I got into a large walk of orange-trees alone with the beautiful Leonora, a bleſſing I had often wiſhed for in vain; and yet was more modeſt and timid than ever I had been. I cannot tell whether ſhe took notice of it, or whether it was her goodneſs which made her ſpeak firſt to me after this manner; My mother, ſaid ſhe, will have juſt reaſon to quarrel with Stephano for failing us to day, and troubling you to wait here ſo long. And I am infinitely obliged to him, replied I, for procuring me, though without deſign, the greateſt happineſs I ever hope to enjoy. I have too many obligations to you, ſaid ſhe, to omit any thing that may prove to your advantage; therefore, pray let me know wherein the happineſs conſiſts you mention, that I may ſhare your joy, if it be ſuch as will not offend a modeſt ear. I fear, ſaid I, you will make that joy ceaſe—I! anſwered ſhe; no, I never was envious of any man's proſperity, much leſs of a perſon's who has ventured his life on my account. It is not your envy that I fear, anſwered I——What other motive, returned ſhe, can there be to make me oppoſe your felicity? Your diſdain, ſaid I. I ſhall be

much perplexed, added ſhe, till you let me know what I ſhould diſdain, and which way this diſdain may concern you. I could ſoon unfold this riddle, ſaid I, but I cannot tell whether you will be pleaſed to underſtand it. Do not let me hear it then, replied ſhe; for when we have ſuch doubts, it ſhews the thing is not to be eaſily underſtood, or is ſuch as may diſpleaſe. I muſt confeſs, I have admired a hundred times ſince, how I was able to anſwer her, my mind being leſs intent upon what ſhe ſaid, than full of fears of her mother's return, and loſing the opportunity of entertaining her with my paſſion. However, at laſt, I muſtered up all my aſſurance, and, without prolonging a converſation, which did not carry me faſt enough to the point I aimed at, I told her, not minding her laſt words, That I had long ſought an opportunity to ſpeak with her, thereby to confirm what I had preſumed to expreſs in my letter; which yet I durſt not have undertaken, but from my knowledge that ſhe had ſeen it. To this I added a great deal of what I had written, and ſaid moreover, that, being upon my departure to ſerve the pope in the war he was making on ſome princes of Italy, and re-

to die there, ſince I found myſelf unworthy of her; I would intreat her only to tell me, what ſentiments ſhe would have entertained of me, had my fortune been anſwerable to the ambition I had to love her. She told me with a bluſh, that my death would not be indifferent to her; and therefore, added ſhe, if you are ſtill in the ſame obliging diſpoſition towards your friends, do not let us loſe one who has been ſo ſerviceable to us; or, at leaſt, if you will needs die, for ſome greater reaſon than what you have juſt now expreſſed; yet defer your death, till we have ſeen each other in France, whither my mother and myſelf are ſuddenly returning. I preſſed her to explain, more clearly, the ſentiments ſhe had for me; but her mother was by this time come ſo near us, that ſhe could not have ſatisfied me, if ſhe had intended it. Madame la Boiſſiere looked but coldly upon me, perhaps, becauſe I had an opportunity of entertaining her daughter, who likewiſe ſeemed ſomewhat uneaſy. This made me to ſtay but a ſhort time with them, after their being returned home. I left them, highly pleaſed with my adventure, putting the beſt interpretation on Leonora's anſwer I could.

The

The next day I omitted not to wait upon them according to my cuſtom; but was told they were gone abroad, and the ſame anſwer I received for three days together, for I was not diſcouraged by the firſt or ſecond denial. In fine, ſignior Stephano adviſed me to go no more, becauſe madame la Boiſſiere would not ſuffer me to ſee her daughter; adding, he took me to be a man of more ſenſe, than to expoſe myſelf to a refuſal. Then he acquainted me with the reaſon of my diſgrace. Leonora's mother had caught her writing a letter to me, it ſeems; having ſeverely reproved her for which, ſhe afterwards gave ſtrict orders, that her people ſhould always deny their being within, whenever I came to pay my viſit to them: and then I likewiſe diſcovered the ill office Saint Far had done me; and that, ever ſince that time, the mother had been very much diſpleaſed with my viſits. As for the daughter, Stephano aſſured me, my perſonal merit would have made her wave my mean birth and fortune, could ſhe but have gained her mother's conſent; who was too haughty and covetous to be perſuaded to it. I ſhall not trouble you with the miſery this unwelcome news occaſioned me: I was as much concerned at it,

as if I had injuſtice done me in being refuſed by Leonora, though I never durſt hope to have the leaſt poſſeſſion of her heart: I railed at Saint Far, and had ſome thoughts of fighting him; but then conſidering how much I had been obliged to his father and brother, I had no other refuge but my tears. I wept like a child, and was ever uneaſy, but moſt of all in company. Now came on the ſad moment of our departure, and I was forced to go away, without taking my laſt farewell of Leonora. We made a campaign in the pope's army, where I courted death as much as I could; but wherein fortune diſappointed me, as ſhe had ever done in my other attempts. I could not meet that death which I ſought for, but gained reputation I aimed not at, though I had been proud of it at any other time: I could cheriſh nothing, but the pleaſing remembrance of Leonora. Verville and Saint Far were at length recalled to France by the baron d' Arques, who received them like a father that doted on his children. My mother gave me a very indifferent reception; and as for my father, he dwelt at Paris, with count Glaris, who had choſen him governor to his ſon. The baron d' Arques, who had been

been made acquainted with my feats of arms in the war of Italy, where I had ſaved Verville's life, deſired to have me live with him in the quality of a gentleman, and companion. He gave me leave to viſit my father at Paris, where I almoſt found leſs welcome, than I had done from my mother. Any other perſon in his ſituation, that had had a ſon ſo accompliſhed as myſelf, would certainly have preſented him to the Scotch earl, but my father carried me out of his houſe in great haſte, as if he feared I ſhould diſgrace him: as he went about the ſtreets, he reproached me for being too fine; told me, I ſeemed proud, and that it were better for me to learn a trade, than thus to ſtrut about with a ſword by my ſide. You may imagine, this diſcourſe ſounded but harſh in a young man's ears, that had been well educated, and gained ſome reputation in the wars, and who beſides had dared to love a handſome young lady, and declared his paſſion to her. I muſt freely own, the ſentiments of love and reſpect, which a ſon owes to his father, could not make me refrain from looking on him as a very troubleſome old man. He led me about through three or four ſeveral ſtreets, with the ſame civility and careſſing expreſſions,

and then ſhook me off abruptly, charging me not to come near him any more. I was willing enough to obey this laſt injunction, and therefore quitted him, to go and wait upon monſieur de Saint Sauveur, who received me like a father indeed, and blamed my own parents for their unnatural treatment; promiſing alſo, never to abandon me. The baron d' Arques had ſome buſineſs, which obliged him to go and dwell at Paris. He took up his lodgings at the farther end of the ſuburbs of Saint Germains, in a very ſtately houſe, that had been lately built with many others, which have rendered that place the fineſt part of the city. Saint Far and Verville made their court to the king, went to the Thuilleries, or to viſit, as all young men of quality do in that vaſt city. For my own part, when I waited not on them, I frequented all the fencing-ſchools to keep my hand in uſe; or went to the play-houſe; which is, perhaps, one reaſon, why I am now a tolerable actor. Verville took me aſide one day, and told me he was fallen deeply in love with a young lady that dwelt in the ſame ſtreet. He informed me ſhe had a brother, by name Saldagne, who was as jealous both of her, and another ſiſter under his tuition, as if

he

he had been their huſband. He told me alſo, he had made no ſmall progreſs in his amour, having perſuaded her to give him admittance by night into their garden, the back-door whereof opened into the fields, as ours did likewiſe. Having made me his confident, he deſired me to accompany him, and uſe all my rhetoric to gain the favour of the woman that was to attend her. Verville had ſhewed me all along ſuch friendſhip, that I could not reaſonably refuſe him any thing: ſo we went out at our garden back-door about ten o'clock at night, and ſoon after were admitted into the garden, where the miſtreſs and the maid waited for us. Poor madame Saldagne trembled all over, and durſt not ſpeak; Verville's courage was little better; the waiting woman was as mute as a fiſh; and I, who only came to accompany Verville, ſpoke not a word, neither had I any deſire to talk. At laſt, Verville ſummoned his courage to his aid, and led his miſtreſs into a cloſe walk, having firſt laid a ſtrict charge upon the waiting woman and myſelf to play the centinels part, which we obſerved ſo religiouſly, that for a long time we walked together, without ſpeaking one word to each other. At the end of the alley we

met the young lovers: Verville aſked me aloud, whether I had entertained the maid as ſhe deſerved? I replied, I thought ſhe had no reaſon to complain. No, in truth, anſwered ſhe, for he has not yet ſpoke one word to me. Verville laughed, and aſſured her, that I was worth her converſation, though I was ſomewhat melancholly. Madame Saldagne ſaid, that her woman was not to be deſpiſed; and thereupon thoſe happy lovers left us again, only bidding us be ſure that nobody came to ſurprize them. I then prepared myſelf to be plagued with the chat of a waiting woman, who I expected would now examine me about my wages, what acquaintance I had among the chamber-maids in the pariſh, how many new catches I could ſing, and what vails I had with my maſter. After this, I imagined ſhe would acquaint me with all the ſecrets of Saldagne's family, and tell me both his faults, and his ſiſter's; for there are few ſervants that meet, without giving one another a full account of all they know of their maſters and miſtreſſes: but I was not a little ſurprized, to find myſelf in diſcourſe with a waiting woman, who began thus; I conjure thee, thou dumb ſpirit, to tell me, whether thou art a ſerving man,

man, or not; and if thou art one, by what admirable virtue haſt thou forborne thus long to ſlander thy maſter? I was amazed to hear a chamber-maid talk at that extraordinary rate; and ſo aſked her, by what authority ſhe took upon her to exerciſe me? I perceive, ſaid ſhe, thou art a ſtubborn ſpirit, and that I muſt repeat my conjuration. Tell me therefore, rebellious ſpirit, by the power given me over all proud and ſelf-conceited ſerving men, tell me who thou art? I am a poor young fellow, anſwered I, that would fain be now aſleep in my bed. I find, replied ſhe, it will be no eaſy matter for me to know: yet this much I clearly diſcover, that thou haſt little of a courtier in thee; for, continued ſhe, ſhouldſt thou not firſt have broken ſilence in an humble addreſs; then have taken me by the hand, entertained me with bagatelles, ſuddenly ſtruggled for a kiſs, attempted my breaſt, till thou hadſt been beaten off with three or four boxes on the ear, as many kicks behind, and numberleſs ſcratches on the face; and then have returned home with ſcars of honour, and the marks of an amorous adventurer? There are ſome maids in Paris, ſaid I, interrupting her, whoſe marks I would be proud to bear;

but

but there are others whom I ſhould dread to look upon for fear of dreaming of the devil. What! thou thinkeſt me then, ſaid ſhe, perhaps one of thoſe ſcare-crows. But, good ſir, don't you remember, that, in the dark, all cats are grey? True, replied I, but I'll never do that in the dark, which I may repent when the light appears. But if I be handſome, ſaid ſhe, what then? Then I have ſhewn you leſs reſpect than you deſerve, replied I: for if your beauty be equal to the charms of your wit, you deſerve to be ſerved and courted by the niceſt rules of gallantry. And couldſt thou ſerve a lady according to the niceſt rules? ſaid ſhe. Better than any man living, replied I, provided I loved her. What matters that, ſaid ſhe, ſo ſhe loved you? Nay, both muſt join iſſue, where I engage in an amour, replied I. Truly, ſaid ſhe, if I may judge of the maſter by his man, my miſtreſs has made no indifferent choice in Verville; and that waiting maid, whom thou ſhouldſt condeſcend to love, would have no little cauſe to be proud of herſelf. It is not enough to hear me talk, ſaid I; you muſt ſee me too. I believe both may be better let alone, replied ſhe—We were obliged to end our converſation here; for monſieur

Saldagne

Saldagne knocked hard at the ſtreet-door, which they made no great haſte to open, as his ſiſter might have time to ſlip up into her chamber. The poor lady and her woman went away in ſuch haſte and diſorder, that they did not ſo much as bid us adieu when they ſhut us out of the garden. Verville, when we got home, would have me go to his chambers. I never ſaw a man ſo much in love, and ſo well pleaſed: he extolled the wit of his miſtreſs, and told me, he ſhould never be ſatisfied till I had ſeen her. He kept me there all night, repeating every thing ſhe had ſaid over and over ſo often, that I could not get to bed till break of day: For my own part, I was ſurprized to have met with ſo much wit in the converſation of a waiting-maid; and muſt confeſs, I had a ſort of itching deſire to know whether ſhe was handſome or not, though the memory of my Leonora made me very indifferent towards all the good faces I ſaw every day at Paris. Verville and I ſlept till noon; and as ſoon as he waked, he wrote to madame Saldagne, and ſent the letter by his footman, who was acquainted with her woman. This fellow was of Lower-Britany, of a very diſagreeable figure, and a worſe underſtanding.

When

When I ſaw him going, it came into my head, that if the party, whether waiting-woman, or chamber-maid, whom I had entertained with chat the night before, ſhould ſee him in that horrid form, and diſcourſe with him, ſhe could not certainly miſtake him for the perſon that waited on Verville. This great block-head did his meſſage well enough for ſuch a creature; having found out madame Saldagne with her other ſiſter, called Madame Lery, whom ſhe had entruſted with Verville's love to her. As he was waiting for an anſwer, they heard monſieur Saldagne humming upon the ſtairs. He was coming to his ſiſter's chamber, who haſtily conveyed the footman into a cloaths-preſs. However, the brother made no long ſtay with his ſiſter, and ſo the fellow was reſtored to the open air again. Madame Saldagne locked herſelf up in her cloſet a while, to anſwer Verville's letter, whilſt madame Lery diſcourſed with the ſervant, whoſe converſation, I doubt, had but very little entertaining. Her ſiſter having made an end of her letter, releaſed her from our meſſenger, by ſending him back with a billet, wherein, ſhe promiſed to meet Verville that night, at the ſame time and

place

place as before. As ſoon as it was night, you may imagine, Verville was ready to go to the place of aſſignation: we were admitted into the garden, and it fell to my lot to cope with the ſame perſon I had entertained before, and whom I found to be very agreeable. She expreſſed more wit this ſecond time, than ſhe had done the firſt; and both her accent and manner was ſo charming, that I confeſs I wiſhed ſhe might be as handſome as ſhe was ingenious. In the mean time, ſhe could not believe me to be the Breton ſhe had ſeen before; nor could ſhe apprehend why I ſhould have ſo much more wit by night than by day; for having heard the fellow relate that monſieur Saldagne's coming into his ſiſter's chamber had put him into a great fright, I took it upon myſelf, and played upon her with it, aſſuring her, that I was not then in ſo much fear for myſelf, as for madame Saldagne. This put it out of all diſpute, that I was the ſame ill-favoured rogue; and I obſerved afterwards, that ſhe began indeed to diſcourſe like a chamber-maid. She then informed me that monſieur Saldagne was a terrible man; that having loſt both father and mother in his youth, being maſter of a great eſtate, and having few relations, he exerciſed a great

great deal of tyranny over his ſiſters, to make them turn nuns; uſing them, not only like an unjuſt father, but like a jealous inſupportable huſband. I was about to take my turn, and tell a ſtory of the baron d' Arques and his ſons, when the garden door, which we had not made faſt, was of a ſudden thrown open; when in comes monſieur Saldagne, attended by two footmen, one of whom carried a lighted flambeau in his hand. He came from a houſe which ſtood in the ſame row with his and ours, where they gamed every day, and where Saint Far uſually went to paſs away the time. They had both played there that evening, and Saldagne having loſt his money betimes, was coming home by his garden, contrary to his cuſtom, and there ſurprized us, as I told you, finding the door open. We were, at that time, all four together in a covered walk, which gave us an opportunity of ſhunning his and his ſervants obſervation. The young lady remained in the garden, upon pretence of taking the freſh air; and to give it the better colour, began to ſing, though ſhe had little inclination to it, as you may eaſily imagine. In the mean time, Verville having ſcaled the wall, by the help of a vine-

vine-arbour, jumped down on the other ſide; but a third footman of Saldagne's who was then coming in, ſeeing him leap, failed not to run and give his maſter notice of his ſeeing a man leap from the garden-wall into the ſtreet. At the ſame inſtant I fell down with a great noiſe into the garden; the ſame arbour, by means of which Verville had made his eſcape, unfortunately yielding under me. This noiſe, together with the fellow's tale, alarmed all that were in the garden. Saldagne ran to the place from whence the noiſe came, followed by his three men; where ſpying a man with his ſword drawn, (for as ſoon as I could get up I put myſelf into a poſture of defence) he attacked me at the head of his company; but I ſoon made him know that I was no eaſy conqueſt. The fellow that carried the flambeau, advanced farther than the reſt, which gave me an opportunity of ſeeing Saldagne's face, which I preſently knew to be the ſame Frenchman's that would have murthered me at Rome, for having hindered him from being rude to Leonora, as I have before related. He knew me likewiſe at firſt ſight, and made no doubt but that I was come thither to take a juſt revenge. He therefore cried out, You

ſhall

ſhall not eſcape me now, I aſſure you. I had almoſt broke one of my legs with the fall; however, I maintained a running fight, till I retreated into a ſummer-houſe, whither I ſaw Verville's miſtreſs run in juſt before, in the utmoſt conſternation. She ſtayed within, though ſhe ſaw me enter; but whether ſhe wanted time or courage to go out, I know not. For my part, my reſolution encreaſed, when I conſidered they could attack me only at the ſummer-houſe door, which was very narrow. I wounded Saldagne in one of his hands, and the boldeſt of his footmen in his arm, which procured me a little reſpite; yet I ſtill loſt all hopes of eſcaping, believing they would at laſt make ſhorter work with me, and diſpatch me with piſtols, having found it too difficult to be done with ſwords. But Verville came to my relief: he would by no means go home without me; and having heard the buſtle and claſhing of ſwords, he ventured to bring me off from the danger he had brought me into, or at leaſt to ſhare it with me. Saldagne, with whom he had already made an acquaintance, thought he came to his aid, as a friend and neighbour. He took it as a great obligation, and accoſting him, ſaid, You ſee ſir, how

I am ſet upon in my own houſe. Verville, who underſtood his meaning, immediately replied, he would be his ſervant againſt any other man, but that he came to protect me againſt all the world. Saldagne, enraged to find himſelf miſtaken, ſwore deſperately, he did not doubt but to make his party good againſt two ſuch villians himſelf; and at the ſame time, charged Verville moſt furiouſly, but was however repulſed by him with a great deal of gallantry. I now thought it high time to get out of the ſummer-houſe and join my friend. Having ſeized the lacquey that carried the flambeau, and being loth to kill him, I contented myſelf with giving him only a back ſtroke on the head; but this frightened him ſo much, that he ran off from the garden into the fields, crying out all the way, Thieves, thieves. The other footmen fled likewiſe; and Saldagne fell into a hedge at the ſame inſtant that the light left us, either wounded by Verville, or by ſome other accident. We did not, however, think fit to help him up, but concerted our own eſcape with all imaginable haſte. Saldagne's ſiſter fearing ſome violence from her raſh brother, ſtepped out of the ſummer-houſe, where I ſaw her, and, melting

melting into tears, begged ſoftly that we would take her along with us. Verville was over-joyed to have his miſtreſs in his power, and under his protection. We found our garden-door half open as we left it; nor as yet would we make it faſt, leſt we ſhould have ſome other ſudden occaſion to go out. In this garden there was a pretty ſummer-houſe, painted, and neatly adorned, where we uſed to regale ourſelves in hot weather, and which ſtood at ſome diſtance from the body of the houſe. My young maſters and myſelf ſometimes practiſed fencing there; and this being the moſt delightful place about our houſe, the baron d' Arques, his ſons, and myſelf, had each of us a key to it, that we might go in at pleaſure, and keep out the ſervants, leſt they ſhould damage the books, or ſpoil the furniture. In this place we locked up our charge, whoſe grief would admit of no comfort. I told her we would only leave her for a few moments, to conſult her ſafety and our own, and then immediately return. Verville was a quarter of an hour before he could wake his country footman, who had been drinking. As ſoon as he had lighted a candle, we conſulted on a proper place to hide the lady; and at laſt reſolved to lead

lead her to my chamber, in the upper part of the houſe, as being frequented by no body but myſelf and a ſervant that belonged to me. We then returned back to the ſummer-houſe with our light; when Verville ſtarting back at his entrance, ſo very much ſurpriſed me, that I had not time to aſk what ailed him; nay, ſcarce to put out the candle, before Verville cried, Who goes there? His brother, Saint Far, anſwered, it is I, what the devil do you do here in the dark at this time of night? I was talking with Garigues, ſaid Verville, becauſe I am not yet ſleepy. I am here upon the ſame account, returned Saint Far; therefore pray let me have the room a little to myſelf. We did not trouble him to aſk that favour twice; but I ſtealing out the lady as dextrouſly as I could, by thruſting myſelf betwixt her and Saint Far, who was entering at the ſame time, carried her off to my chamber, bewailing her fate in a moſt lamentable manner. I then went down to Verville's room, where his man was ſtriking a light; and was there told by my young maſter, with grief in his face, that he muſt of neceſſity return again to Saldagne's. What to do? ſaid I; would you kill him out right? Alas! my

my poor Garigues, ſaid he, I ſhall be the moſt unhappy man in the world, if I do not get madame Saldagne from out of her brother's hands. What! can ſhe be there ſtill, and in my chamber too, replied I? Would to God that were true, ſaid he, ſighing. I fancy you dream, returned I. No, no, I do not dream, we have brought away her eldeſt ſiſter inſtead of her. Why, replied I, were you not both in the garden together? Nothing more certain, ſaid he. Why then will you return to her brother's to endanger yourſelf again, ſince that ſiſter you are in pain about is now ſafe in my chamber? Ah! Garigues, cried he again, I knew well enough what I ſaw: and ſo do I likewiſe, quoth I; and to prove your miſtake, do but come up and ſee madame Saldagne. He told me I was a madman, and followed me with the greateſt concern in the world. But my aſtoniſhment equalled his grief, when I found in my chamber a gentlewoman I never ſaw before, and not the ſame with her I brought from the other houſe. Verville was as much amazed as myſelf, but more ſatisfied by far; for, contrary to expectation, he now found himſelf with his miſtreſs, and confeſſed his miſtake: but

I could make him no anſwer, neither was I able to comprehend by what enchantment, a lady whom I had been with all the while, ſhould, on a ſudden, be tranſformed to another, in the time we went from the ſummer-houſe to my chamber. I looked earneſtly upon her, and thereby aſſured myſelf that ſhe was not the ſame perſon whom we brought from Saldagne's. Verville perceiving my ſurprize, What's the matter, ſays he? I tell you once more, that I myſelf was miſtaken. Nay, ſaid I, it is I that am in an error, if madame Saldagne came hither along with us. With whom could ſhe come elſe, replied he? I know not, nor nobody elſe, ſaid I, unleſs it be the lady herſelf. Nor can I tell with whom I came myſelf, ſaid madame Saldagne, unleſs it were with that gentleman, pointing to me; for, continued ſhe, it was not monſieur Verville that brought me away from my brother's, but a man that came into the garden immediately after you went out, and ſummoned thither, I ſuppoſe, either by my brother's groans, or the footman's outcries. He cauſed my brother to be carried into his chamber; which my waiting-woman having informed me of, and withal aſſured me that he was my brother's acquaintance,

and a neighbour; I went and ſtayed for him in the garden, where I conjured him to take me away with him till the next day, when I deſigned to retire to a lady's of my acquaintance, where I would ſtay till my brother's fury was over; which, I told him, I had all the reaſon in the world to dread. This perſon was ſo civil as to offer to conduct me whither I pleaſed, and promiſed to protect me, even againſt my brother, at the hazard of his life. It was under his conduct I came to this houſe; where Verville, whoſe voice I knew, ſpoke to the ſame man; and, immediately after, I was brought up to this chamber, where you now ſee me.

This account from madame Saldagne, though it did not clear all my doubts, yet it aſſiſted my comprehenſion in diſcovering the cauſe of this fortunate event. As for Verville, he was ſo intent upon viewing his miſtreſs, that he ſcarce minded what ſhe ſaid. He began to tell her a thouſand ſoft things, without troubling himſelf to know which way ſhe came into my chamber; and I, leaving them together, took a candle, and went back to the ſummer-houſe, reſolved on ſpeaking to Saint Far, however blunt and captious, as uſual, he might receive me.

But

But I was not a little ſurprized to find, inſtead of him, the ſame gentlewoman, whom I was certain I had brought myſelf from Saldagne's: and what yet encreaſed my wonder was, to ſee her in great diſorder, and like one who had ſuffered ſome horrid inſult. Her cap was torn to tatters, and her handkerchief bloody, as was likewiſe her face: Verville, ſaid ſhe to me, as ſoon as I appeared, approach me not, unleſs it be to take away my life, wherein you will find leſs difficulty, than in offering a ſecond violence to my honour; for as Heaven has given me ſtrength to reſiſt your firſt attempt, ſo I doubt not of an ability to revenge the ſecond: is this, added ſhe weeping, that paſſionate love you profeſſed to my ſiſter? Oh! how dear I pay for my compliance with her follies? But, when we act contrary to our duty, it is but juſt we ſhould undergo what moſt we ſtand in fear of. But what do you meditate upon now? purſued ſhe, perceiving my aſtoniſhment; do you feel a remorſe of conſcience for your baſe action? If ſo, I can forget it with all my heart: you are young; and I muſt own it was a great piece of folly in me, to truſt myſelf to the diſcretion of one of your years: conduct me therefore to my

again, I conjure you; for, paſſionate and ſevere as he is, I dread him leſs than I do you, who are a brutiſh monſter, and ſuch an inſatiable enemy to our family, that, not ſatisfied with ſeducing a young lady, and murdering a gentleman, you would ſtill commit a more wicked action to gratify your hatred.

Having made an end of her ſpeech, which ſhe uttered with great vehemence, ſhe wept ſo bitterly, that I never in my life beheld a perſon more afflicted. The judgment I had retained, amidſt all this confuſion, was now loſt; and if ſhe had not ceaſed to ſpeak of her own accord, I never ſhould have interrupted her, ſo much was I aſtoniſhed at the authority of her expoſtulations. But perceiving ſhe had done ſpeaking, madam, replied I, neither am I Verville, nor is he, I can aſſure you, capable of ſuch a baſe action as you complain of. What! ſaid ſhe, are you not Verville? Did not I ſee you engaged with my brother? Did not a gentleman come to your aſſiſtance? And did not you bring me hither on my entreaty, where you have offered a rudeneſs, impious both to my honour and my youth? She could ſay no more, ſo much her grief oppreſſed her heart. For my part, I never

never was ſo perplexed, and could not apprehend how ſhe ſhould both know Verville, and not know him at the ſame time. I told her, I was an abſolute ſtranger to the rudeneſs ſhe complained of; and that ſince monſieur Saldagne was her brother, I would conduct her, if ſhe pleaſed, to the ſame place where her ſiſter was. Theſe words were ſcarce out of my mouth, when Verville and madame Saldagne entered into the room where we were, ſhe being abſolutely reſolved on going back to her brother's; but what put this dangerous reſolution into her head I know not. The two ſiſters embraced each other as ſoon as they met, and renewed their flowing tears, as if they were contending who ſhould weep moſt. Verville earneſtly entreated them to return to my chamber, laying before them the difficulty of getting into their houſe after the great alarm the whole family had been in; adding withall, the danger of expoſing themſelves to their brother's fury, the ſafety of the place they were in, and how near it was to break of day; which being once come, they might enquire how all things went at Saldagne's, and then could reſolve what was moſt convenient to be done. Verville eaſily

perſuaded them to condeſcend to this propoſition; and they finding themſelves ſecure in each other's company, we all went up to my chamber; where having examined the ſtrange accidents which perplexed us, we were as apt to believe, as if our eyes had been witneſſes, that Saint Far had certainly made an attempt upon madame Lery's honour; Verville and myſelf knowing him capable of the like and worſe actions.

We were not deceived in our conjectures. Saint Far had been gaming in the very houſe where Saldagne had loſt his money, when paſſing by his garden a little after the ſcuffle, he met Saldagne's footman, who related to him what had befallen his maſter, who, they ſaid, had been ſet upon by ſeven or eight rogues, thereby to excuſe their own cowardice for leaving him in the lurch. Saint Far thought himſelf obliged to offer him his ſervice as a neighbour, and did not leave him till he had ſeen him carried to his bed-chamber; after which, madame Saldagne intreated him to protect her againſt her brother's fury, and came along with him as her ſiſter had done with us. He intended to ſecure her at the ſame ſummer-houſe where we were, as I ſaid before;

and

and he being as much afraid leſt we ſhould ſee his lady, as we were careful he ſhould not ſee ours, the two ſiſters by this accident meeting, juſt as he was coming in, and we going out, I happened to catch his lady by the hand, whilſt he laid hold by a like miſtake upon mine; and thus the ladies were exchanged. This was the more eaſily done, becauſe I had put out my candle; and the ladies were ſo terribly frightened as well as we, that they knew not in the hurry what they did. As ſoon as we had left the ſummer-houſe, Saint Far finding himſelf alone with a very handſome lady, and, having more inſtinct than reaſon; or, to deſcribe him in his natural colours, being more of the brute than the man; he took advantage of the opportunity, without minding the conſequence, and was regardleſs of what an irreparable affront he offered to a lady that had thrown herſelf into his arms for protection. But his brutality was rewarded as it deſerved. Madame Lery defended herſelf like a lioneſs; ſhe bit him, ſcratched him, and ſmeered him all over with blood: after which, he went up to his bed, and ſlept as ſoundly as if he had done the beſt action in the world.

You may wonder, perhaps, how madame Lery happened to be in the garden at the time we were ſurprized by her brother, ſince there was nobody there but her ſiſter and her waiting-woman. This at firſt puzzled me as well as you; but at laſt I learned from them both, that madame Saldagne, not daring to truſt her waiting-woman with the ſecret of her amours, had perſuaded her ſiſter to attend her in the garden; and this was the perſon I entertained under the title of Maudlin. Here my wonder was at an end, how a chamber-maid could be miſtreſs of ſo much wit as I found in her converſation; and madame Lery told me, ſhe was no leſs puzzled to find me ſo witty in the garden by night, and ſuch a blockhead by day, when ſhe miſtook me for the dull Breton. Ever after that we entertained ſentiments for each other ſomething above a bare eſteem; and I dare ſay ſhe was not leſs ſatisfied than I, to find our conditions more equal, than if either of us had been a mercenary ſervant.

The day appeared while we were yet talking; ſo we left our ladies in my chamber, where they might ſleep if they pleaſed, whilſt Verville and I went to

conſult

conſult what was next to be done. For my part, having no ſuch love-fancies to diſturb my breaſt as Verville had, I was almoſt dead for want of ſleep; but that was no reaſon for abandoning my friend while ſuch a load of buſineſs oppreſſed him. I had a footman as ſubtile and witty as Verville's valet de chambre was dull and blockiſh; I gave him what inſtructions I could, and ſent him to make diſcovery how affairs ſtood at Saldagne's. He performed his meſſage very diſcreetly, and informed us that Saldagne's ſervants reported, the thieves had deſperately wounded their maſter. As for his ſiſters, there was no more mention made of them, than if they never had exiſted; but I knew not whether this ſilence proceeded from a want of regard for them, or becauſe he gave poſitive orders to his ſervants not to ſpeak of them, as a precaution to ſtifle any ſcandalous rumour. I ſee here muſt be ſomething of a duel after all, ſaid Verville; nay, perhaps ſomething of a murder, replied I: whereupon I acquainted him that Saldagne was the ſame bully who had endeavoured to murder me at Rome, and how we came to know one another in the garden; adding withall, that, if he did but imagine, as

there was all likelihood in the world, that I lay there in wait to take my revenge of him; then certainly he could not at all ſuſpect the intelligence between his ſiſters and us. I went to give an account to thoſe fair ladies of our diſcoveries; and in the mean time, Verville viſited Saint Far, to ſound his ſentiments, and diſcover the truth of our ſuſpicions. He ſoon perceived his face full of ſcratches; but whatever queſtion Verville put to him, he could get no other anſwer, than, as he came from the gaming-houſe, he found Saldagne's garden-door open, his houſe in an uproar, and himſelf very much wounded in the hands of his ſervants, who were carrying him to his chamber. A very ſtrange accident, ſaid Verville; no doubt but his ſiſters will take it much to heart. They are very handſome ladies, and I muſt go and viſit them. What's that to me? ſaid the brute; who then began to whiſtle, without minding or giving any anſwer to whatever his brother afterwards deſired to know.

Verville left him, and returned to my chamber, where I was employing all my eloquence, to comfort our fair diſtreſſed ladies. They were diſconſolate, even to deſparation; and apprehended the roughe-

eſt

eſt treatment from their brother's jealouſy and ſavage temper, as being a man wholly enſlaved by his paſſions. My lacquey brought them ſome meat from the next cook, which he continued to do for fifteen days together; for ſo long were they concealed in my chamber; which was above the reſt, and ſo much out of the common road and paſſage, that nobody diſturbed them in the leaſt. They could willingly have put themſelves into ſome nunnery for ſhelter; but becauſe of this adventure, had juſt reaſon to apprehend their brother would confine them longer than they ſhould chuſe to be kept there. In the mean time, Saldagne's wounds were in the fair way of curing, and Saint Far went every day to viſit him. Verville did not ſtir out of my room; but that was not taken much notice of in the family, for he frequently paſſed many whole days in it, either reading to or in diſcourſe with me. His love for madame Saldagne encreaſed every day, neither did ſhe love him leſs. Her elder ſiſter liked me pretty well, nor was ſhe indifferent to me in her behaviour. Not that my paſſion for Leonora was a whit abated, but I had no manner of hopes from her.

Some time after, Verville received a note from Saldagne, wherein he challenged him to meet him with a second in the plain of Grenelle, to decide there their quarrel with the sword; and by the same note, he desired Verville to bring no other person but myself with him; which made me suspect, he intended to take us both in the same trap. My suspicion was not altogether groundless, having already experienced his treachery; however, Verville would not mind it, resolving to give him any just satisfaction, and to offer a marriage with his sister. He sent for a hackney-coach, though there were three coaches belonging to the family. We went to the place appointed, where Saldagne waited for us, and where Verville was much astonished to find his own brother his enemy's second. We omitted neither submissions nor intreaties, to bring things to a fair accomodation, but nothing less than fighting would serve the turn of those two unjust and irrational men. I was about to protest to Saint Far, how much it was against my will to draw my sword against him: but he told me bluntly, he never liked me in his life, nor could any thing endear me to him, till he had opened a passage or two in my body, with

with his ſword's point, for his good will to enter at. With theſe words he came fiercely towards me; I only put by his thruſts for ſome time, reſolving, if poſſible, to grapple with him, and ſo diſarm him, though with apparent danger of being wounded myſelf. Fortune befriended my good intention, for he ſoon after ſlipt down at my feet: I gave him time to riſe; but that which ſhould have made him my friend, did but increaſe his enmity. In fine, having given me a ſlight wound in the ſhoulder, he vapoured like a bully, and cried, I think you feel me now. My patience being worn out, I preſſed upon him, and having put him into diſorder, got ſo happily within his ſword, that I ſeized on the hilt. The man you hate ſo very much, ſaid I, will now, however, give you your life.—He ſtruggled a while to no purpoſe, and would not reply a word, like at obſtinate raſh brute as he was, though I repreſented to him, it was our duty to go and part his brother and Saldagne, who were grapling and rolling over one another upon the ground. But I perceived I muſt be more rough with him; therefore wrenching his hand, I forced away his ſword, which I threw at a great diſtance from him. I now

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ran immediately to aſſiſt Verville, who had cloſed with his antagoniſt; but was no ſooner come up to them, than I ſaw, afar off, ſeveral horſemen galloping towards us; Saldagne was ſoon after diſarmed, and, at the ſame inſtant, I found myſelf run through the back by Saint Far. I could now no longer maſter my reſentment, and therefore returned him a thruſt, that made no little wound. The baron d' Arques, his father, who came in at that moment, and ſaw me wound his ſon, now hated me as much as he had loved me before. He ſpurred his horſe up towards me, and gave me a violent blow on the head. Thoſe that came with him, followed his example, and jointly ſet upon me. I defended myſelf moſt happily againſt ſo many enemies, but muſt needs at laſt have fallen a ſacrifice to them, if Verville, the moſt generous friend on earth, had not thruſt himſelf betwixt them and me, at the hazard of his own life. He gave his footman a good cut over the pate, becauſe he found him more forward than the reſt. I yielded up my ſword to the baron, but that could not appeaſe him; he called me raſcal, ungrateful villain, and gave me all the injurious names his anger could ſuggeſt,

geſt, and even threatened to have me hanged. I boldly replied, that, as much raſcal and ungrateful villain as I was, I had given his eldeſt ſon his life; nor had I offered to hurt him, till he had treacherouſly wounded me behind. Verville maintained to his father, I was in the right; but he ſaid, he would never ſee my face again. Saldagne went with the baron d'Arques into the coach, where they had already put Saint Far; and Verville, who would by no means leave me, took me into another with himſelf. He ſet me down at one of our prince's houſes, where he had many friends, and returned to his father's ſoon after. Monſieur d' Saint Sauveur ſent a coach for me that very night, and carried me privately to his own houſe; where he took as great care of me, as if I had been his only ſon. Verville came to ſee me the next day, and told me, his father had been informed of the challenge by Saldagne's ſiſters, whom he happened to find in my chamber. He afterwards aſſured me, with a great deal of joy, that the buſineſs was made up, by an agreement for a double marriage to be conſummated, as ſoon as his brother's wounds were healed, which were not in any dangerous part. That it lay

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in my power to be made friends with Saldagne; and that his father's anger was appeaſed, who was very ſorry he had miſuſed me. He added, he wiſhed I might ſoon recover, to be a ſharer in their joy; but I replied, I could not find in my heart to ſtay in a country, where I muſt be continually reproached with the meanneſs of my birth, as his father had done to me juſt before; but would ſoon leave the kingdom, either to loſe my life in the wars, or raiſe myſelf by my ſword, to a condition proportionable to the ſentiments of honour his noble example had inſpired me with. I am apt to believe, he was concerned at my reſolution; but a man in love can attend long to nothing but his own paſſions.

Deſtiny was thus purſuing his ſtory, when the report of a gun was heard in the ſtreet, and preſently after, a man playing upon an hand organ. This kind of muſic having never, perhaps, been uſed at the gate of an inn before, called all the people to their windows, that had been waked with the gun. In the mean time the organ played on, and thoſe who were no ſtrangers to ſuch ſort of inſtruments, took notice they played a church-tune. Nobody could apprehend the de-

ſign

ſign of ſo devout a ſerenade, which, however, was not yet acknowledged for ſuch. But the doubt was ſoon cleared, by two indifferent voices; whereof one ſqueaked out in a treble, and the other roared in a rumbling baſs. Theſe two catter-wallers were accompanied by the organ, and all together made ſuch a horrid harmony, as ſet all the dogs a howling round about them. They ſung a ſong that begins thus

Our warbling notes, and ivory lutes,
Shall raviſh every ſoul.

After theſe harſh notes, they over-heard a perſon ſcolding at the ſingers for ſinging ſo lamentably always in one tune. The poor choriſters replied, they knew not what the devil he would have them ſing. Sing what you will elſe, ſaid he, ſpeaking a little louder, for I will have ſinging for my money. Upon this peremptory ſentence, the organ changed its tone, and another anthem was ſung, as devoutly as before. None of the hearers had yet dared to ſpeak, for fear of interrupting the muſic; when Rancour, who could not for his life be ſilent on this occaſion, bauled out aloud: What! are they uſed here to perform divine ſervice in the ſtreet? One of the

company ſaid, they were ſinging the Tenebræ in good earneſt: it is a nocturnal proceſſion, adds a third: in fine, every merry fellow in the inn had his jeſt upon the muſic; neither could any gueſs, who was the ſerenading fool, nor whom he deſigned to compliment. In the mean time, the anthem was carrying on towards a concluſion, when ten or a dozen dogs, which had followed a proud bitch, ran in betwixt the muſician's legs; and becauſe many rivals cannot be long together without quarreling, after ſome ſnarling and grinning, they fell together by the ears on a ſudden, with ſo much fury and animoſity, that the poor muſicians, to ſave their ſhins, betook themſelves to their heels, leaving the organ to the dog's mercy. Theſe immoderate lovers were ſo uncivil, in the heat of the ſcuffle, as to throw down that harmonious machine. And the conſort being thus out of tune, the hoſt ordered the inn door to be opened, intending to ſecure the organ from farther miſchief. Whilſt he and his ſervants were buſy in this charitable office, the organiſt returned, accompanied by three perſons, amongſt whom were a woman, and a man muffled up in a cloak: this man was the very Ragotin in perſon,

who

who, deſigning to ſerenade Stella, had addreſſed himſelf for that purpoſe to a little eunuch, the organiſt of a neighbouring church. It was this monſter, neither man nor woman, that ſung the treble part, and played on the organ, which his maid had brought; an overgrown choriſter ſinging the baſs; and both for the ſum of two teſters—ſuch was the ſcarcity of proviſions at that time in the plentiful country of Mayne. As ſoon as the inn-keeper found out the author of the ſerenade, he cried out aloud, on purpoſe to be heard by all that were at the window, Is it then you, monſieur Ragotin, that have come with your veſpers to my door? you had beſt go to bed, and not diſturb my gueſts at this time of night. Ragotin replied, that he was miſtaken in his man, and yet ſpoke it ſo, as if he intended to diſcover what he ſeemed to deny. In the mean time, the organiſt finding his inſtrument much battered, and being a very choleric creature, as all beardleſs animals are wont to be, ſwore to Ragotin, he would make him pay for it; Ragotin replied, he did not care a ſtraw for what he could do: ay, but I'll make you care, ſaid the eunuch, I will be paid my damages. Mine hoſt and his ſervants gave their votes

votes for the organiſt; but Ragotin made them underſtand, like a parcel of ignorant fools as they were, that this was never the cuſtom in ſerenades, and ſo went away, not a little proud of his gallantry. The muſicians laid the organ on the back of the eunuch's maid, who carried it home to her maſter's houſe. He, in a very melancholy mood, followed her. The inn-doors were locked up again, Deſtiny wiſhed the ladies good night, and referred the remainder of his ſtory to the next opportunity.

CHAP. XVI.

The opening of the ſtage, with other matters of no leſs conſequence.

NEXT day the players aſſembled early in the morning in one of thoſe chambers they had at the inn, in order to rehearſe the play they were to act that afternoon. Rancour, whom Ragotin had made confident of his ſerenade, which he ſeemingly made a difficulty to believe, told his comrades, that the little fellow would not fail to be there ſuddenly, to receive their applauſe for his refined piece

piece of gallantry. He alſo maliciouſly entreated them, that, whenever he hinted at it, they would take no notice of it, but put him off with ſome other diſcourſe. Ragotin came into the room at the ſame inſtant, and having ſaluted the players in general, began to mention his ſerenade to Stella, who at that time proved a meer wandering planet to him; for ſhe ſtill changed place, and never anſwered his queſtions about what time ſhe went to bed, and how ſhe had paſt the laſt night? This made him leave her, and addreſs himſelf to Angelica; who, inſtead of entertaining him, ſtudied the part ſhe had in a play. He next went to Cave, who would not ſo much as look upon him. Every one of the players in their turns, exactly obſerving Rancour's directions, made no anſwer to Ragotin's queſtions, ſhifting the diſcourſe as often as he began to mention what paſſed the laſt night. At length, preſſed by his vanity, and impatient to ſuffer his reputation's lingering any longer, he thus ſpoke aloud to them all; Will you give me leave to tell you a great truth? cried he, You may do as you pleaſe, replied ſome one of them: why then, added he, it was I that gave you the laſt night's ſerenade. What! do they

they give ſerenades with organs in this country? ſaid Deſtiny. But whom did you intend it for? Was it not, continued he, for the fair lady that ſet ſo many honeſt dogs together by the ears? No doubt of it, ſaid Olive, for thoſe ſnarling curs would never have diſturbed ſuch harmonious muſic, had they not been monſieur Ragotin's rivals, and jealous of him. Another of the company would needs have his jeſt, and therefore ſaid, without doubt he is in his lady's favour, and meant nothing but honourable love, ſince he could court her in the open ſtreet. In ſhort, every one in the room had a fling at Ragotin, about his ſerenade, except Rancour, who ſpared him, as having the honour of being his confident; and it is probable, this curriſh raillery had ſtill employed the whole company, if the poet (who, in his nature, was as vain and ridiculous a coxcomb as Ragotion could be, and who in every thing endeavoured to gratify his pride) had not taken them off, by ſaying to them, in the tone of a man of quality, or rather of a falſe pretender to it; now you talk of ſerenades, I remember, that when I was married, I had one beſtowed upon me, which laſted a fortnight together, and conſiſted of a hundred

hundred ſeveral ſorts of inſtruments: it made a noiſe all over the Marais. The genteeleſt ladies in the Palace Royal took it to themſelves; ſeveral beaux aſſumed the honour of it; nay, a man of quality took ſuch a fit of jealouſy upon it, that he ordered his man to fall foul upon thoſe who beſtowed it. But they met with their match, for theſe were all my own country men, and as brave fellows as ever ſtood upon legs; and beſides moſt of them had been officers in a regiment I raiſed in the late inſurrection of the populace in our parts. Rancour, who checked his bantering humour in favour of Ragotin, could not be ſo civil to the poet, whom he continually plagued. Wherefore, taking up the cudgels againſt this darling of the muſes, he ſaid to him, Your ſerenade, as you deſcribe it, ſavoured more of Bedlam, or a proceſſion of rams-horns, than of gallantry; and therefore, probably proving troubleſome to the perſon of quality, he ſent out his footmen either to ſilence, or drive away the horrid noiſe. And what confirms me in my opinion, proceeds Rancour, is, the caſe of your bride, who died for age, within ſix months after your hymeneal ſolemnity, as you term it, was over: nay, but ſhe died of a fit of hiſtericks,

ſaid

ſaid the poet. I ſay, rather of a fit of the grandmother, or great grandmother, replied Rancour: for, added he, in the very beginning of Henry the Fourth's reign, ſhe was paſt having any fits of the mother, to my knowledge; and, to let you ſee that I am better acquainted with her than ever you yourſelf were, though you tell us daily ſuch wonders of her, I will now relate to you a paſſage of her life, which I am poſitive never yet came to your knowledge. In the court of queen Margaret —This beginning of a hiſtory drew all the company in a ring about Rancour, whom they knew to be furniſhed with malicious memoirs enough againſt all human kind. But the poet, who dreaded him exceedingly, interrupting him, cried out, I'll lay a hundred piſtoles to the contrary: which abrupt defiance made the company ſo merry, that they laughed him out of the room. This was his uſual way, by offering ſuch wagers of conſiderable ſums, to maintain his daily hyperboles, which amounted to the weekly quantum of a thouſand or twelve hundred, beſides an innumerable quantity of lies into the bargain. Now Rancour was the comptroller-general both of his words and actions, and the aſcendant he had over him was ſo great

great, that I dare compare it to the genius of Auguſtus over Anthony; that is to ſay, like to like, without putting a brace of ſtrollers in the ſcale againſt two famous Romans. Rancour having thus begun his ſtory, and being interrupted by the poet, as I ſaid before, every one earneſtly intreated him to purſue it: but he excuſed himſelf, by promiſing to give them, another time, a faithful account of the poet's whole life, wherewith his wife's ſhould be likewiſe interwoven. It was now high time to rehearſe the play that was to be acted the ſame day in a neighbouring tennis-court. Nothing worth obſervation occurred at the rehearſal. After dinner they acted their play, and came off with great applauſe: Stella charmed the whole audience with her beauty; Angelica did not want admirers, and both of them acted their parts to the general ſatisfaction. Deſtiny and his comrades did wonderfully well; inſomuch, that many of the audience who had often ſeen plays acted at Paris, confeſſed, that the king's players could hardly have outdone them. Ragotin, in his heart and mind, ratified the donative he had made of his body and ſoul to Stella, in the preſence of Rancour, who promiſed him every day to perſuade his miſtreſs to accept it. Without this

promiſe, deſpair had ſoon made this little lawyer the noble ſubject of ſome tragical ſtory. I cannot tell whether the men pleaſed as well as the ladies of Mans in their acting, as the women did the men. Nay, if I did know the truth of it, I think I ſhould hardly diſcover it; but becauſe the wiſeſt man is not able at all times to keep his tongue at reſt, I conclude this preſent chapter, to avoid further temptation.

CHAP. XVII.

The ill ſucceſs of Ragotin's civility.

AS ſoon as Deſtiny had ſtripped himſelf of his old embroidery, and put on his ordinary apparel, la Rappiniere carried him to the common goal, becauſe the man they had taken the day the curate of Domfront was ſet upon, deſired to ſpeak with him. In the mean time the actreſſes went home to their inn with a numerous attendance of citizens. Ragotin happening to be near Mrs. Cave, as ſhe came out of the tennis-court where they had acted, offered her his hand, to lead her home, though he would rather have paid that civil office to his dear Stella;

Stella; he did the like to Angelica; ſo that he was 'ſquire upon the right and left. This double civility occaſioned a treble inconveniency: for Cave, who had the upper hand, as in all reaſon ſhe ought, was crouded to the wall by Ragotin, that Angelica might not be forced to walk in the kennel. Beſides, our little figure reaching no higher than their waiſts, pulled down their hands ſo much, that they could ſcarce keep themſelves from tumbling over him. But that which moſt troubled them was, his often looking behind to ogle Stella, who was talking to a brace of country-beaux that would by all means lead her to her lodgings againſt her will. The poor actreſſes endeavoured, many times, to get loſe from their gentleman-uſher; but he griped ſo faſt, that they thought themſelves in fetters. They deſired him a hundred times to ſpare himſelf that trouble; but he only anſwered, excuſe me, (his ordinary compliment) and griped their hands ſtill harder and harder. They were therefore obliged to be patient, till they came to their chamber-ſtairs, where they hoped to be ſet at liberty; but Ragotin was better bred: and repeating only, excuſe me, excuſe me, to all they could ſay, he endeavoured,

deavoured, at firſt, to go up with them abreſt, which he found impoſſible: then Mrs. Cave turned her back to the wall, and crept up ſide-ways, dragging Ragotin after her, who dragged Angelica in like manner, ſhe dragging nothing, but laughing like a fool. Now, as an additional inconveniency, when they were within four or five ſteps of the chamber-door, down comes a ſervant belonging to the inn, with a huge ſack of oats on his back, of an exceſſive weight, who, with much ado, ſo heavy was his load, bid them go down, for that he could not get up again with his burthen. Ragotin would needs argue the caſe with him; but the fellow ſwearing bluntly, he would let fall his ſack upon them, hurried them down again much faſter than they had come up. Ragotin would not, however, let go his hold. The man with the oats preſſed haſtily upon them, which cauſed Ragotin to miſs a ſtep, ſo that he hung in the air, holding ſtill the players by the hand, till he pulled down Cave upon him, who ſupported him more than her daughter, by reaſon of the advantage of the place. Thus ſhe tumbled down upon him, lighting with her feet on the pigmy's belly and breaſt, and knocked her head ſo fiercely

againſt her daughter's, that they lay all three tumbling on the floor. The fellow thinking they could not eaſily get up time enough, and being no longer able to ſupport his load, lets his ſack down upon the ſtairs, ſwearing and curſing like an oſtler. The ſack burſt open with the fall, and then came in the hoſt, who ſcolded like a mad man at the oſtler. But as he was mad at the fellow, ſo the fellow was mad at the players, and they as mad at Ragotin, who was as mad as the madeſt of them all, becauſe madame Stella, coming not far behind, was witneſs to this diſgrace, not much inferior to the late adventure of the deep crowned hat, wherein his head had been moſt unmercifully pent up, not to be recovered till a pair of ſciſſars had broke the inchantment. Mrs. Cave ſwore a great oath, that Ragotin ſhould never lead her again, and ſhewed Stella how black and blue he had ſqueezed her hands. Stella told her, it was a juſt judgment upon her, for robbing her of monſieur Ragotin, who had engaged himſelf to bring her back to her lodgings after the play; adding, ſhe was glad of the miſchance that had befallen him, for breaking his word. However, he heard nothing of this, being all the

while in diſpute with the hoſt, who threatened to make him pay the waſte of his oats, and had already offered to beat his ſervant on the ſame account, who for that reaſon beat Ragotin, and called him petty-fogger. Angelica began to banter him in her turn, and reproached him with his infidelity to Stella: in fine, fortune plainly ſhewed how little ſhe was yet concerned in the promiſes made to Ragotin, of making him gain her affection to that degree, as would render him more happy than any lover in the whole country of Mayne; nay, the countries of la Parche and Loval added to the number. The oats were ſwept up again, and the actreſſes went into their chamber, one by one, without any farther misfortune. Ragotin did not follow them, nor can I exactly tell what became of him. Supper-time at laſt came, and to ſupper they went: after ſupper, every one withdrew to their reſpective apartments, and Deſtiny locked himſelf up with the actreſſes, in order to purſue his ſtory.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

The continuation of the hiſtory of Deſtiny and Stella.

I Made the foregoing chapter a little of the ſhorteſt: perhaps this will prove ſomewhat longer; however, I am not ſure of it; but we ſhall ſee. Deſtiny took his uſual ſeat, and reſumed his tale after this manner. I ſhall finiſh my ſtory as briefly as I can, fearing I have already tired you too much with the account of my life and fortune. Verville having paid me a viſit, as I ſaid before, and not being able to perſuade me to return to his father's, left me, to all appearance, much troubled at the reſolution I had taken, and went home; where a while after he married madame Saldagne, as Saint Far did madame Lery. She had as much wit as Saint Far had dulneſs; and I wonder how two perſons of ſuch unequal talents have been able to live together in the matrimonial ſociety. In the mean time, I preſently recovered, and the generous monſieur de Saint Sauveur, approving of my deſign of leaving the kingdom, furniſhed me with money for my journey;

and Verville, who did not forget me, though now married, preſented me with a good horſe, and a hundred piſtoles. I took my journey towards Lyons, to paſs that way into Italy, with deſign to go once more to Rome; and after having taken my laſt farewell of Leonora, to repair with ſpeed to Candia, and there put an end to my wretched life. At Nevers I lodged at an inn which ſtood near the river; and coming thither very early, and not knowing how to ſpend my time till ſupper, I went to take a walk on the great ſtone-bridge, built over the river Loire. There were a couple of women walking there at the ſame time; one of which, who looked as if ſhe was ſick, leaned on the other's ſhoulder, and had much ado to crawl along. As I paſſed by, I pulled off my hat to them, without taking notice of their faces, and continued walking for ſome time on the bridge, ſtill keeping my thoughts employed upon my misfortunes, and chiefly upon my amour. I was well enough dreſt, as all thoſe ought to be, whoſe quality cannot excuſe an indifferent habit. When I came again near the women, I over-heard one of them ſay, for my part, I ſhould believe it too, had we not heard he was dead. I cannot

tell

tell how I came to look behind me, having no reaſon to think they talked of me, and yet no man but myſelf was the ſubject of their diſcourſe. I preſently found the firſt lady to be madame la Boiſſiere, grown very pale and wan, and who then reſted upon her daughter Leonora's ſhoulder. I made directly towards them, with more aſſurance than I had done in Rome, having improved myſelf, both as to my perſon and behaviour, during my ſtay at Paris. I found them ſo ſurprized and amazed, that I verily believe they would have fled from me, had madame la Boiſſiere been able to run; and this ſurprized me not leſs. I aſked them what happy chance brought me into the preſence of two perſons, whom I eſteemed above all the world. Theſe words diſpelled their fears. Madame la Boiſſiere told me, I ought not to wonder at ſeeing them look upon me with ſome aſtoniſhment, ſince ſignior Stephano had ſhewed them a letter, from one of thoſe gentlemen I waited on at Rome, by which he was informed of my being killed in the war of Parma; adding ſhe was over-joyed to find the news falſe, which had been ſo unwelcome to her. I replied, that death was not the greateſt misfortune that could

befal me, and that I was going to Venice to court it, and, if poſſible, to ſpread the report of my death with greater certainty than before. They grew ſad at my reſolution; and the mother began to expreſs a great deal of tenderneſs for me; the cauſe of which I could not well underſtand. At laſt I learned from herſelf the ground of her civility. I was now in a capacity to ſerve her, and her preſent condition would not allow her to deſpiſe and look coldly upon me as ſhe had done at Rome. They had met with a misfortune which had put them to great ſtreights: for having turned all their furniture into ready money, they had left Rome, with a French maid that had ſerved them a long time, and ſignior Stephano's man, a Fleming like himſelf, who was deſirous of returning to his native country. This fellow and the wench, it ſeems, loved each other well enough to venture a match; and yet they kept their amour ſo private, that nobody ever diſcovered it. Madame la Boiſſiere being come to Rewenna, went thence by water. At Nevers ſhe found herſelf ſo very ill, that ſhe could go no farther. During her ſickneſs ſhe was ſomewhat hard to be pleaſed, and her maid more unwilling to humour her than before.

before. One morning the wench and her paramour were miſſing; and, what was more grievous ſtill, the poor lady's money was miſſing alſo. Her grief encreaſed her diſtemper, and ſhe was forced to ſtay at Nevers till ſhe had received letters from Paris, from whence ſhe expected a ſupply to proceed on her journey. Madam la Boiſſiere told me this ſad adventure in a few words. I led them back to their inn, which was the ſame where I had taken up my quarters. After I had brought them to their chamber, and ſtood a while with them, I retired to my own, leaving them to their ſupper. For my part, I could not eat a bit, but thought it was at leaſt five or ſix hours while I was at table. I waited upon them as ſoon as they had given me notice that I ſhould be welcome. I found the mother in bed; and the daughter received me with a countenance as ſad as it appeared joyful a moment before. The mother was ſtill more ſad than the daughter, and I grieved for company. We ſtared a while upon each other without ſpeaking a word. At laſt madame la Boiſſiere ſhewed me a letter ſhe had newly received from Paris, which caſt both her and her daughter Leonora into the deepeſt affliction. She

expreſſed the reaſon of her grief with a flood of tears, and her daughter Leonora wept alſo moſt bitterly; which moved me ſo ſenſibly, that I thought I did not expreſs my ſenſe of it enough, though I proffered them all I could poſſibly do to aſſiſt them. I am as yet unacquainted with the cauſe of your grief, ladies, ſaid I; but if my life can any way contribute to your relief, you may ſet your minds at reſt. Tell me, therefore, madam, ſaid I, applying myſelf to the mother, what I muſt do to ſerve you: money I have, if you want any; and courage likewiſe if you fear any enemies; and the ſatisfaction of having ſerved you, is the only recompence I expect. My words and manner gave them ſo full an aſſurance of the reality of my ſentiments, that their affliction was ſomewhat abated. Madame la Boiſſiere gave me a letter to peruſe, wherein a gentlewoman of her acquaintance informed her, that a certain perſon, who was nameleſs, but whom I judged to be Leonora's father, was commanded to leave the court, and had retired into Holland. Thus this poor lady found herſelf in a ſtrange country, without either money, or the leaſt hopes of getting any. I made her a ſecond proffer

of

of the ſmall ſtock I had, which might amount to about five hundred crowns; and told her alſo that I would wait upon her into Holland, or any other part of the world ſhe had a mind to go to. In ſhort, I aſſured her, ſhe had found in me, a perſon that would do her all the ſervice ſhe could expect from a valet, and ſerve and honour her like a dutiful ſon. I bluſhed extremely at the word ſon: but I was no more the hateful man, that had been denied admittance into their houſe in Rome, and to whom Leonora was inviſible; for now ſhe was much more civil, and her mother leſs ſevere. At every offer I made, ſhe ſtill replied, Leonora would be very much obliged to me. All was ſcored upon Leonora's account, inſomuch that one would have taken her mother to have been only a waiting-woman that ſpoke in her miſtreſs's behalf: ſo true it is, that the generality of the world reſpect people only ſo far as they are ſubſervient to their own intereſt. I left them very much comforted, and retired to my chamber the moſt contented man that could be. I paſſed the night very pleaſantly, though waking frequently, which kept me ſomewhat late in bed, for it was break of day before I began to

ſleep.

ſleep. Leonora appeared to me the next day, more nicely dreſt than ſhe had the day before; and ſhe could not but obſerve, that I had taken a little more care of myſelf. I led her to church without her mother, who was as yet too weak to go abroad. We dined together, and from that time forward were but as one family. Madame la Boiſſiere very thankfully acknowledged the good offices I had tendered them, and often aſſured me, that ſhe would not die in my debt. I ſold my horſe; and no ſooner had the ſick lady recovered her ſtrength, but we took a tilt-boat, and went down the river to Orleans. During the time we were on the water, I enjoyed my Leonora's converſation; nor was ſo great a felicity interrupted by her mother. I found her ſenſe as charming as her looks; nor had ſhe reaſon to think mine ſo dull as ſhe had found it in Rome. What can I ſay more? In ſhort, ſhe was as much taken with me, as I was captivated by her; and you may witneſs ever ſince you have ſeen us together, how little our reciprocal affection is diminiſhed.—What, ſaid Angelica, interrupting him, is then Stella that Leonora? Who but ſhe? anſwered Deſtiny. At which Stella was pleaſed to ſay, her

friend

friend had reaſon to queſtion whether ſhe was that Leonora, whom Deſtiny had made the heroine of a romance. It is not upon that ſcore I ſtart the queſtion, replied Angelica, but rather becauſe we are ever in doubt of what we moſt deſire. Madame Cave ſaid, that, for her part, ſhe had been confident it was ſo, even from the beginning, but deſired them to wave any farther diſcourſe till Deſtiny had made an end of his ſtory, who went on thus. We arrived at Orleans; where our entrance was ſo pleaſant, as well deſerves a particular relation. A pack of ſcoundrels, who always wait at the water-ſide in expectation of ſtrangers, to carry home their goods, crouded into our boat. There were at leaſt thirty that offered to take up two or three little bundles betwixt them, which, however, the weakeſt of theſe lazy rogues might have carried ſingly under his arm. Had I been alone, perhaps I might not have been ſo wiſe as to bear calmly with their inſolence. Eight of them ſeized upon a little bundle, not weighing much above twenty pounds, which they ſeemed to lift up from the ground with much trouble; and having got it betwixt them, held it aloft above their heads, upon their fingers ends. All

the

the mob that ſtood by the river-ſide fell a laughing, and we were obliged to do ſo too. However, I bluſhed as red as ſcarlet to go through the whole town with ſuch a retinue: as for the reſt of our goods, which would not have loaded one porter, they employed twenty at leaſt, my very piſtols being carried in ſtate by four luſty rogues. The order of our march at our entrance into the town was as follows: Firſt, eight hang-dogs, either drunk, or ſuch as ought to have been ſo, carried a little box behind them, as I told you before. Next followed my piſtols and holſters, each carried by two porters. Madame la Boiſſiere, no leſs vexed than myſelf, went immediately after: ſhe was ſitting in a great wicker-chair, faſtened to two poles, and carried by four watermen, who relieved each other by turns, and had an hundred impertinent jeſts as they went along. The reſt of our goods came after her, being only a little portmanteau, and a bundle covered with canvas, which ſeven or eight of theſe raſcals toſſed from one to another all the way. I brought up the rear of this proceſſion, leading Leonora by the hand, who laughed ſo heartily, that I could not but be delighted with their roguery in ſpite of myſelf.

myſelf. As we marched along, the paſſengers ſtanding ſtill, gazed upon us; and the noiſe they made on this occaſion drew all the people to their windows and doors. At laſt we arrived at the ſuburbs, which is the road towards Paris, attended by the mob, and took up our lodgings at the ſign of the Emperor. I put the ladies into a parlour, and afterwards threatened the rogues ſo ſeriouſly, that they were contented to take a ſmall piece of money for their pains, the inn-keeper and his wife taking my part againſt them.

Madame la Boiſſire, whom the money I had furniſhed her with ſooner cured than any cordials beſides could have done, found herſelf ſtrong enough to bear the coach; wherefore I took up three places in one that was to go the next morning; and, within two days after, we arrived ſafe at Paris. As we alighted at the inn, I made acquaintance with Rancour, who came from Orleans in another coach at the ſame time with ours. Hearing me enquire for the inn to which the Calais coach came, he told me he was juſt going thither himſelf; and if we had not hired a lodging, he would carry us to a woman of his acquaintance, who let lodgings ready furniſhed, where we

ſhould

ſhould have good accommodations. We took him at his word, and found as he had told us. Their landlady was the widow of one that had all his life-time belonged to a play-houſe, ſometimes as a door-keeper, and ſometimes as a ſcene-man, and had often tried to act under parts, but was generally hiſſed off the ſtage. Having ſcraped ſome money together at the play-houſe, he furniſhed a houſe, let lodgings, took boarders, and by all this made a ſhift to gain conſiderably.

Here we took a couple of rooms, which were pretty convenient: but madame la Boiſſiere receiving a confirmation of the ill news ſhe had before concerning Leonora's father, and hearing ſo much of the diſagreeable beſides, which was concealed from us, ſhe relapſed into her former diſeaſe. This put off our journey to Holland for a while, whither ſhe reſolved to go under my conduct; and Rancour, who was going to the ſame country to a company of players, was contented to ſtay for us, upon my promiſing to defray his charges. Madame la Boiſſiere received frequent viſits from one of her friends, who had waited at the ſame time with her upon the ambaſſador's

lady

lady at Rome, and had likewiſe been her confidante, while Leonora's father made love to her. This woman acquainted her with her pretended huſband's retirement, and did her ſeveral good turns during the time we ſtayed in Paris. I went out of door as ſeldom as I could, for fear of being ſeen by ſome of my acquaintance; nor did I find it a great trouble to ſtay within, ſo long as I enjoyed my Leonora's company, whoſe favour I gained more and more by my conſtant care of her mother.

At the perſuaſion of this woman, who, as I told you, came often to viſit us, we went one day to Saint Clou, to air and refreſh the ſick lady: our landlady came in for one among us, and Rancour for another. We took a boat when we came to the water-ſide; afterwards walked in the beſt gardens; and, having had a ſmall collation, Rancour reconducted the women towards the boat, whilſt I ſtayed behind to diſcharge the reckoning of an unreaſonable hoſteſs, who kept me longer from them than I intended. I got off as cheap as I could, and haſtened to rejoin my company; but what was my aſtoniſhment to ſee the boat gone a good way off from the ſhore, carrying my company towards

towards Paris, and leaving me behind, without any notice, or ſo much as my footboy who had the care of my ſword and cloak. Standing at the water-ſide, very much troubled at their not waiting for me, I heard a great uproar in another tilt-boat which lay hard by; and drawing ſomewhat near, I perceived two or three gentlemen, or perſons that looked like ſuch, who would needs fall foul on a waterman becauſe he would not follow our boat. I leaped at a venture into that boat, juſt as it was launching forth, the waterman fearing he ſhould be roughly handled. But if I was troubled that my company had left me at Saint Clou, I was no leſs perplexed to find that he who had offered this violence, was the ſame Saldagne, whom I had ſo much reaſon to hate. At the inſtant I diſcovered him, he removed from the place he ſat in, and ſeated himſelf by me. I did not know which way to look, and hid my face from him in the beſt manner I could. But finding him ſo near, that it was impoſſible to conceal myſelf long, and knowing I had no ſword, I took the moſt deſperate reſolution that could be, and which even hatred could not have ſuggeſted, had it not been attended with jealouſy; I ſeized

him

him by the middle, and threw myſelf into the river with him. Whether his gloves, or his ſudden ſurprize, hindered him, I cannot tell, but he was not able to keep hold of my cloaths, and never was man nearer drowning. A great many of the neighbouring boats came to ſave us, but every one thinking we had fallen into the water accidentally, except Saldagne, who knew the truth, without being in a condition to diſcover or to purſue me, I got on ſhore again without much difficulty, having only a thin ſuit on, which did not much hinder my ſwimming; and thinking it worth my labour to make haſte, I got far enough off from Saint Clou before Saldagne was fiſhed up.

As they had not a little ado to ſave him, ſo, I dare ſay, they could hardly believe his relation that I threw him into the water, and ventured my own drowning to procure his. I was forced to go a great way about to get into Paris, and durſt not enter the city till night; having no need to dry my cloaths, the heat of the ſun and my violent exerciſe having left but little moiſture in them.

At length I got to my dear Leonora, whom I found in great affliction. Rancour and our landlady were over-joyed to ſee me

me again, and ſo likewiſe was madame la Boiſſiere, who, the better to make her think I was her ſon, acted the part of a diſtreſſed mother: ſhe excuſed herſelf in private to me for their not ſtaying; aſſuring me the fright Saldagne had put them into, hindred them from thinking on me; beſides, that, except Rancour, the reſt of our company would have rather embarraſſed than helped me, if I had engaged Saldagne. They told me, that, at their going from the tavern, this ſpark followed them to the water-ſide, where he very uncivilly preſſed Leonora to unmaſk; but her mother diſcovering him to be the ſame man that had attempted the like at Rome, ſhuffled into the boat in a fright, and made the waterman put off from the ſhore, without ſtaying for me. Saldagne, in the mean time, being accompanied by a couple of rakes, like himſelf, got into the next boat with his two comrades, where I found him threatening the waterman to make him follow Leonora.

This adventure made me keep more within doors than I had formerly done; and madame la Boiſſiere's melancholly contributing much to her malady, we were obliged to remain a great part of the winter at Paris: but being at laſt informed,

ed, that an Italian prelate, who came from Spain, was going to Flanders through Peronne, Rancour made intereſt to comprehend us in the paſſport in the quality of comedians.

One day, after we had waited upon this Italian prelate, who lodged in the Rue de Sein, we ſupped, in a frolick, in the ſuburbs of Saint Germain, with ſome players of Rancour's acquaintance; and going over the Pont-Neuf afterwards very late, were ſet upon by five or ſix rogues. I made the beſt defence I could; and, to give Rancour his due, he did as much as any brave man could have done; inſomuch, that he ſaved my life, though he could not keep me from being ſeized by theſe robbers, becauſe my ſword had moſt unhappily fallen from my hands. Rancour, however, got out of their clutches, with the loſs only of his cloak, but I was plundered of all I had, except my doublet and breeches; and, to aggravate my misfortunes, they rifled me of an enameled box with Leonora's father's picture in it, which madame la Boiſſiere had left with me, to try what I could get for ſome diamonds it had round the caſe. I found Rancour at the bridge-foot, wounded in the arm and face, as I myſelf

ſelf was, though ſlightly, in the head. Madame la Boiſſiere was very much concerned for the loſs of the picture; but the hopes of ſeeing the original ſhortly, comforted her. In fine, we went from Paris to Peronne; from Peronne to Bruſſels; and from Bruſſels to the Hague; from whence Leonora's father had been gone about a fortnight before for England, where he intended to ſerve the king againſt Cromwell. Leonora's mother was now ſo deeply afflicted at his departure, that ſhe fell ſuddenly ſick and died. As ſhe was breathing her laſt, and ſeeing me grieve as much as if I had been her own ſon, ſhe recommended her daughter to me, and made me engage that I would not forſake her, but endeavour to find out her father, and reſtore her to his poſſeſſion. Not long after, a Frenchman robbed me of all the reſt of my money, which reduced both Leonora and myſelf to ſuch neceſſity, that we were forced to get into your company, who, you know, accepted of us through the recommendation of Rancour. You are acquainted with the reſt of my adventures, which ſince that time have been common to us all, at leaſt as far as Tours, where I think I ſaw that devil Saldagne again: and, if not very much

much miſtaken, believe it will not be long before I meet him ſomewhere here, which I fear leſs for my own part than for Leonora's, who would loſe a moſt faithful ſervant, if I ſhould happen to miſcarry, or be forced by my unlucky ſtars to part from her.

Thus Deſtiny ended his ſtory; and, after having comforted Stella, whom the relation had a little diſordered, by renewing the remembrance of her misfortunes, at which ſhe wept as much as if then they had juſt happened, he took his leave of the actreſſes and went to bed.

CHAP. XIX.

Some reflections which are not amiſs, Ragotin's new diſgrace, and other things, which you may read if you pleaſe.

LOVE, which makes the young undertake any thing; and the old forget every thing; love, which occaſioned the wars of Troy, and many others beſides, that I do not think worth while to mention here, would needs make it known in the city of Mans, that he is as much to be dreaded in a pitiful inn, as in

the richeſt palace whatſoever. He was not therefore contented with depriving the amorous Ragotin of his appetite, but likewiſe inſpired la Rappiniere with a thouſand irregular deſires; and made Roquebrune languiſh for the operator's wife, by adding a fourth folly to his vanity, bravery and poetry; or rather obliging him to commit a double infidelity; for he had made his amorous addreſſes a long while before, both to Stella and Angelica, who often adviſed him to deſiſt, and not throw away his courtſhip. But all this is nothing to what I ſhall now relate: love triumphed likewiſe over the inſenſibility and miſanthropy of Rancour, who became enamoured of the operator's wife too, and conſequently a rival to the poet Roquebrune. A puniſhment for his ſins, and an atonement for the curſed writings he had publiſhed. This woman's name was Donna Inizella del Prado, a native of Malaga; and her huſband, or he that was reputed ſuch, ſignior Ferdinando Ferdinandi, a gentleman of Venice, born at Caen in Normandy. There were ſeveral others in the inn beſides thoſe already mentioned, who were infected with the ſame diſeaſe, as dangerouſly, if not more ſo, than thoſe whoſe ſecrets I have

have revealed; but they ſhall be diſcovered too in due time and place. La Rappiniere fell in love with Stella when ſhe acted Climene; and intended then to have declared his diſtemper to Rancour, whom he thought capable of doing any thing for money. The heavenly bard Roquebrune deſigned the conqueſt of a Spaniſh lady worthy his courage. But as for Rancour, I cannot imagine by what potent charms this foreign lady could inflame the heart of one with love, who hated all the world.

This worn-out ſtroller, being in hell before his time, I mean in love before his death, was ſtill in bed, when Ragotin troubled him with his paſſion, as it were the belly-ach, and came to deſire of him his pity and aſſiſtance. Rancour aſſured him, ere that day was over, he would do him a notable piece of ſervice with his miſtreſs. La Rappiniere entered Rancour's chamber at the ſame time, who was ſtill dreſſing himſelf. Having taken him aſide, he confeſſed his infirmity to him, and vowed, that if he could bring him into favour with Stella, there was nothing in his power, but he would do for him, even to the making him one of the aſſiſtants, and beſtowing his niece in marriage on

him, whom he deſigned to make his ſole heireſs after his death, becauſe he had no children of his own. The cheating rogue promiſed him yet more than he had done Ragotin, which put this hangman's purveyor in good hopes. Roquebrune came likewiſe to conſult the ſame oracle. He was the moſt incorrigible preſumptuous coxcomb, that ever came from the banks of the Garonne, and one who thought every body believed what he romanced about his family, riches, poetry and valour; ſo that he ſlighted all the dry jeſts which Rancour perpetually caſt at him, preſuming that what he did was only for converſation ſake: and, beſide, he underſtood raillery as well as any man alive, and bore it like a chriſtian philoſopher, even when it touched him to the very quick. He therefore imagined he was admired by all the players, nay, even by Rancour himſelf, who had experience enough to admire but few things; and was ſo far from having a good opinion of this poor brother of the quill, that he made a full enquiry into his extraction, thereby to diſcover whether thoſe biſhops and lords, his countrymen, whom he continually quoted as his relations, were the true branches of the genealogic tree, which this

this fool had cauſed to be drawn in an old roll of parchment. He was very ſorry to find Rancour in company, though he had leſs need to be troubled at that time than any one beſides, it being his cuſtom, to be ever whiſpering in people's ears, and to make a ſecret of every thing, ſometimes of nothing. However he took Rancour into a corner, and at firſt gravely deſired to know whether the operator's wife was a perſon of good ſenſe or no; becauſe he had loved women of all nations but Spaniards; and if ſhe was worth his labour, he ſhould not be much the poorer, if he preſented her with a hundred piſtoles, which he as often mentioned upon every trifling occaſion, as the great family from whence he deſcended. Rancour told him, he was not ſo well acquainted with Donna Inizella, as to anſwer for her ſenſe, though he had often met her huſband in the chiefeſt cities of the kingdom, where he ſold his antidotes; but if he deſired ſo much to be informed about it, it was but joining converſation with her, ſince ſhe began to ſpeak French tolerably well, and he might ſoon be ſatisfied. Roquebrune would needs entruſt him with his pedigree in parchment, that he might dazzle the Spaniſh lady

with the ſplendor of his race; but Rancour told him his pedigree would ſooner make him a knight of Malta, than a happy lover. Whereupon Roquebrune with a ſmiling countenance added, well, Sir, you know what I am. Yes, replied Rancour, I know well enough what you are now, and what you will ever be to your dying day. The poet went away as he came; and Rancour, his rival and confident at the ſame time, drew near to la Rappiniere and Ragotin, who were rivals alſo, though unknown to each other. As for Rancour, beſides that we naturally hate any one that endeavours to rob us of what we deſign for ourſelves, and the general quarrel he had againſt all mankind; beſides all this, I ſay, he ever had a particular averſion to poets, which this diſcovery was not likely to abate. Rancour therefore abſolutely reſolved, from that time forward, to do him all the miſchief he poſſibly could; to which alſo his malign nature prompted him, and fitted him for it: and, not to loſe time, he began that very day, by baſely borrowing money of him, wherewith he new cloathed himſelf from top to toe, and beſides ſtocked himſelf with linen. He had before been a ſloven all his life-time; but

love,

love, which works far greater miracles than any thing elſe, now made him more curious of his dreſs in his declining days. In a word, he changed his linen oftener than became a ſtroller; and began to waſh, powder, and colour his grey hairs, and trim himſelf ſo carefully, that his companions took notice of it. The players had that day a play beſpoke, at an houſe of one of the chiefeſt citizens of Mans, who had made a great treat, and gave a ball at his niece's wedding, whoſe guardian he had been. The nuptials were kept at a very fair country-houſe of his, about a league from che city. The decorator belonging to the ſtrollers, and a carpenter, were ſent in the morning early to erect a ſtage. The whole company of players followed in two coaches, about eleven o'clock, that they might get thither by dinner-time. Donna Inezilla, the Spaniſh lady, made one, at the earneſt intreaty of the actreſſes and Rancour. Ragotin being informed of the buſineſs, went to an inn at the end of the ſuburbs, where he waited the coming of the coaches, and tyed a very fine horſe which he had borrowed, to the grate of the parlour, that looked into the ſtreet. He was ſcarce ſet down to dinner, when word was brought him, that the coach

was in ſight. He flew to his horſe on the wings of love, with a great ſword by his ſide, and a carabine dangling at his breech like a bandileer. He would never confeſs what his fancy was, to go to the wedding with ſuch ſtore of offenſive and defenſive weapons; neither could Rancour his confident ever perſuade him to diſcover it. By that time he had untyed his horſe's bridle, the coaches were ſo near, that he had not time to look for a joſſing-block, that he might appear in ſtate on his ſteed like St. George on horſeback. And being none of the beſt horſemen and unprepared to ſhew his nimble diſpoſition, he did it but very aukwardly; for his horſe's legs were as much too long, as his were too ſhort. However, he ſtoutly reared himſelf in the ſtirrup, and threw his right leg over the ſaddle; but the girths being looſe, this occaſioned a ſtrange diſaſter; for it made the ſaddle to turn round. Yet all things went hitherto well enough, but the curſed carabine, which hung on a belt about his neck like a collar, got ſo unfortunately betwixt his legs before he was ſenſible of it, that his breech could not reach the ſaddle, which was an old-faſhioned one, the carabine lying acroſs from the pummel to the crupper. Thus he ſat in a very

uneaſy

uneaſy poſture, as not being able with the tip of his toe ſo much as to touch the ſtirrups: his heels, however, being armed with ſpurs, he kicked the horſe's ſide in a place he was never uſed to be pricked in, which made him ſtart more briſkly than was neceſſary for a bad rider in that poſture, who had nothing but the carabine to reſt upon. This made Ragotin cling his legs ſtill more cloſe to the horſe's ſides, which made him fling up his hinder legs; when Ragotin following the nature of all heavy bodies, fell on the horſe's neck, who, lifting up his head ſuddenly at a jerk he gave him with the bridle, hit the unfortunate Ragotin a great blow on the noſe; who, thinking to repair his overſight, let go the reins. The horſe having his head given him, he at that very inſtant gave ſuch a great leap, as caſt his rider quite over the ſaddle upon the crupper, with the carabine ſtill between his legs. The horſe not being uſed to carry any thing behind, kicked up again, which places Ragotin in the ſaddle as before. The unſkilful horſeman now clapped his heels cloſe to the ſides afreſh, and then the horſe flung up his hinder legs more than at firſt; which pitched the unfortunate Ragotin juſt

upon the pummel; where we muſt leave him as on a pinacle, to reſt ourſelves a while; for, upon the honour of a gentleman, this deſcription has coſt me more pains, than the whole book beſides, and yet I am not quite ſatisfied with it neither.

CHAP. XX.

The ſhorteſt in this preſent book. Ragotin's fall, and ſomething of the like nature which happened to Roquebrune.

WE left Ragotin planted on the pummel of a ſaddle, not knowing how to behave himſelf, and much perplexed how he ſhould get off. I ſcarce believe Phaeton, of unhappy memory, was ever more troubled with his father's four fiery ſteeds, than was at this time our little lawyer with one, on which he nevertheleſs ſet as quiet as a lamb. That it did not coſt him his life, as it did Phaeton, was owing to fortune, whoſe caprices would be a fit ſubject to expatiate on, were I not in conſequence obliged to releaſe Ragotin from the iminent danger he is in; having beſides, many more things to treat of concerning our ſtrollers, during their reſidence

reſidence at Mans. As ſoon as the diſaſterous Ragotin felt what an uneaſy cuſhion he had under the two moſt fleſhy parts of his body, on which he uſed to ſit as all other rational creatures are wont; I mean, as ſoon as he found himſelf perched on the carabine, he quitted the bridle like a man of diſcretion, and laid hold of the horſe's mane, who at the ſame time run away full ſpeed. Thereupon the carabine went off: Ragotin thought he had been ſhot, his horſe undoubtedly believed the ſame, and therefore made ſuch a ſtumble, that the little man loſt his ſeat; ſo that for a time, he hung by the horſe's mane, with one foot entangled by his ſpur in the ſaddle-cloth; and the other, with the reſt of his body, hanging dangling towards the earth in expectation of a fall, as ſoon as his ſpur ſhould break looſe; together with his ſword, carabine, and bandaleer. At length his foot being diſengaged, his hands let go the mane, and down he tumbled, though with more grace and ſkill than he got up. All this happened in the ſight of the coaches, that ſtopped on purpoſe to ſee what would become of him; or rather to have the pleaſure of laughing at him. He curſed the horſe, who ſtood

ſtock ſtill, as ſoon as he had laid down his load; but to comfort him, they took him into one of the coaches in the poet's room, who was willing to ride, that he might flutter about the coach, and court Inezilla, who ſat in the boot. Ragotin reſigned his ſword and fire-arms to him, which he put on as dexterouſly as any ſon of Mars could have done. He lengthened his ſtirrups, fitted the bridle, and without doubt went up more methodically than Ragotin had done. But ſurely there had ſome ſpell been caſt upon this unlucky horſe that day; for the ſaddle being too looſely girted, as before, turned round with the poet, as it had done with Ragotin; and the ſtring of his breeches breaking, the horſe ran a pretty way with him, whilſt he had but one foot in the ſtirrup, his other ſerving the beaſt as a fifth leg, whereby his back parts became expoſed to all the company, his breeches dangling all the way about his heels. None of the ſpectators laughed much at Ragotin's miſhap, becauſe they were afraid he would hurt himſelf; but Roquebrune's accident was attended with loud ſhouts and laughter from the coaches: the coachmen ſtopped to laugh their fill, and all together hallooed at Roquebrune,

which

which drove him, having diſengaged himſelf, into a houſe for ſhelter, leaving the horſe to his own diſcretion, who very wiſely trotted back again to the town. Ragotin knowing he was reſponſible for the beaſt, alighted out of the coach and went after him; when the poet, having caſed up his poſteriors, returned to the coach much troubled, and no leſs troubleſome to the company by Ragotin's martial equipage, who had undergone this their diſgrace in his miſtreſs's preſence, with which we ſhall conclude the twentieth chapter.

CHAP. XXI.

Which perhaps will not be found very entertaining.

THE players were very well received by the maſter of the houſe, who was a good honeſt man, and one of the moſt conſiderable in thoſe parts. They had two chambers allotted them to lay their cloaths in, and make themſelves ready for the play, which was put off till after ſupper. They dined in private, and, after dinner, thoſe that had a mind to walk,

walk, had the choice of a grove and a fine garden to do it in. A young counſellor of the parliament of Reenes, and near kinſman to the maſter of the houſe, accoſted our players, having diſcovered Deſtiny to be a perſon of more than vulgar judgment, and the actreſſes, beſides their great beauty, to be ſuch as could ſay more than juſt the parts they had learned by heart. They diſcourſed of matters relating to their profeſſion, as plays, and dramatic writers. This young counſellor ſaid, amongſt other things, that there was ſcarce any remarkable ſubject for the ſtage, that had not been blown upon; that all hiſtory was almoſt exhauſted, and that modern authors would at laſt be conſtrained to wave thoſe nice rules of unity of time, and ſtretch it beyond four and twenty hours: that the generality of people did not apprehend what thoſe ſevere rules of the ſtage were good for, being rather pleaſed with action and repreſentation than recitals; and therefore ſuch plots might be contrived as would meet with applauſe, without either falling into the extravagancies of the Spaniards, or being tyed up to the ſtrict precepts of Ariſtotle. From plays, they proceeded to talk of romances. The

counſellor

counſellor ſaid, that nothing could be more diverting, than our modern romances; that the French alone knew how to write good ones; however, that the Spaniards had a peculiar talent to compoſe little ſtories, which they called novelas, which are more uſeful, and more probable patterns for us to follow, than thoſe imaginary heroes of antiquity, who grow oftentimes tedious and troubleſome, by being over-civil, and over-virtuous: in ſhort, that thoſe examples which may be imitated, are at leaſt as beneficial, as thoſe that exceed all probability and belief. From all which he concluded, that if a man could write as good novels in French, as thoſe of Miguel de Cervantes, they would ſoon be as much in vogue as ever heroic romances have been. Roquebrune was not of the ſame opinion: he affirmed very poſitively, that there could be no pleaſure in reading romances, unleſs they contained the adventures of princes; nay, and of great princes too; and, for that reaſon, Aſtrea only pleaſed him in ſome places. In what hiſtories can one find kings and emperors enough to make new romances? ſaid the counſellor. We muſt feign them, replied Roquebrune, as is uſually done in fabulous ſtories,

ſtories, which have no foundation in hiſtory. I perceive then, returned the counſellor, that Don Quixote is very little in your favour. It is the ſillieſt book that ever I read, replied Roquebrune, though it be cried up by a great many men of wit. Have a care, ſaid Deſtiny, it be not rather for want of wit in you, than any defect in the book, that you entertain ſo indifferent an opinion of it. Roquebrune would not have failed to anſwer Deſtiny, had he but heard what he had ſpoke: but he was ſo taken up with telling his feats to ſome ladies, who were come near the players, that he minded him not; but promiſed the fair ladies, he would write a romance in five parts; every part to contain five volumes, which ſhould eclipſe all the Caſſandra's, Cleopatra's, and Cyrus's in the world, though this laſt had the ſirname of Great, as well as the ſon of Pepin. During this, the counſellor was telling Deſtiny and the actreſſes, that he had writ ſome novels in imitation of the Spaniards, and promiſed he would communicate them. Thereupon, Inezilla told them, in a ſort of French that had more of the Gaſcon than the Spaniſh in it, that her firſt huſband had the character of a tolerable writer in

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the court of Spain, having compoſed ſeveral novels that were much eſteemed, ſome whereof ſhe had in manuſcript, which, in her opinion, deſerved to be tranſlated into French. The young counſellor being extremely curious in ſuch kind of compoſitions, told the Spaniſh lady, ſhe would do him a great favour in letting him have the peruſal of them, which ſhe very civily conſented to do; adding withal, that no body was better ſtored with novels than herſelf; for as ſome women in her country would ſometimes attempt to write both in verſe and proſe, ſo ſhe had made it her entertainment, and could amuſe them with ſome novels of her own making. Roquebrune confidently, according to cuſtom, offered to turn them into French. Inezilla, who was perhaps the ſharpeſt Spaniard that had ever come over the Pyrenees, replied, that to do as he pretended, it was not only requiſite he ſhould underſtand the French tongue well, but be equally acquainted with the Spaniſh alſo; and that therefore ſhe could not give him her novels to tranſlate, till ſhe was ſo well acquainted with the French, as to be able to judge whether he was qualified for the undertaking. Rancour, who had been

ſilent

ſilent all the while, ſaid, there was no doubt to be made of his ability, ſince he had been corrector to a printing-houſe. He had no ſooner popp'd out theſe words, but he remembered Roquebrune had lent him money, which made him purſue his jeſt no further: to which the poet, put out of countenance at Rancour's words, replied, that he could not deny but that he had corrected ſome few ſheets, but then they were nothing but what he had publiſhed of his own. Stella, to ſhift the diſcourſe, told Donna Inezilla, that as ſhe was miſtreſs of ſo many agreeable ſtories, ſhe could not be angry if ſhe often importuned her to relate one of them. The Spaniſh lady replied, ſhe was ready to give her ſatisfaction. They took her at her word, and all the company having ſeated themſelves round her, ſhe began a ſtory, though not in the very ſame words that you will find in the following chapter, yet ſo intelligibly, as made them gueſs ſhe was miſtreſs of a great deal of wit in Spaniſh, ſince ſhe diſcovered ſo much in a language, to the delicacies of which ſhe was a perfect ſtranger.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

The Impoſtor out-witted: A Novel.

A Young lady of the city of Toledo, named Victoria, deſcended from the ancient family of Portocarrero, had retired to a houſe ſhe had on the banks of the Tagus, about half a league diſtant from that city, in the abſence of her brother, who was captain of a troop of horſe in the Low Countries. She became a widow at ſeventeen, having been married to an old gentleman that had got a great eſtate in the Indies, who, about ſix months after his marriage, periſhed in a ſtorm at ſea, leaving much wealth to his wife. This fair widow, after the death of her huſband, kept houſe conſtantly with her brother, where ſhe lived in ſuch repute, that, at the age of twenty, all the mothers propoſed her as a pattern to their children, the huſbands to their wives, and lovers as a conqueſt worthy ambition. But as her retirement had cooled the love of many, ſo, on the other hand, it encreaſed the eſteem the world had for her. In her country-houſe ſhe enjoyed, at liberty, all the innocent pleaſures of rural life; when,

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one morning, her ſhepherds brought her two men, whom they had found ſtripped of all their cloaths, and bound faſt to a tree, to which they had been tyed the whole night. They had lent each of them a ſcurvy ſhepherd's coat to cover their nakedneſs; and in this fine equipage they appeared before the fair Victoria. So mean a habit did not hide from her the noble mein of the younger, who made her an elegant compliment, and told her he was a gentleman of Cordoua, Don Lopes de Gongora by name, who, travelling from Sevil to Madrid about buſineſs of great importance, and having overſtayed his time about half a day's journey from Toledo, where he had dined the day before, the night ſurprized them; and both he and his man falling aſleep, expecting a mule-driver who ſtayed behind, ſome thieves finding them in that condition, tyed them to a tree, after having ſtripped them. Victoria doubted not the truth of this relation, his good mein pleading in his favour; however, ſhe thought it would be a mark of generoſity in her to relieve a ſtranger reduced to this ſad extremity. It happened by good luck, that, amongſt the cloaths her brother had left in her cuſtody, there were ſome ſuits,

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for the Spaniards never part with their old cloaths, though they make new ones. They choſe the fineſt, and that which fitted beſt the maſter's ſhape; and his man was alſo cloathed with what they could find next at hand. Dinner-time being come, this ſtranger, whom Victoria had invited to her table, appeared ſo accompliſhed, and entertained her with ſo much wit, that ſhe thought the relief ſhe had afforded him, could never have been better beſtowed. They converſed together the remaining part of the day, and were ſo much taken with each other's perfections, that neither of them ſlept ſo quietly that night as they had done before. The ſtranger would needs ſend his man to Madrid, to fetch him money, and buy him ſome cloaths, or at leaſt he pretended to do ſo; but the fair widow would by no means ſuffer him, promiſing to lend him as much as would carry him to his journey's end. He made ſome overtures of love to her the very ſame day, and ſhe gave him a favourable audience. In fine, in a fortnight's time, the opportunity of the place, the equal merit of theſe two perſons, a great many oaths and vows on one ſide, too much frankneſs and credulity on the other, a promiſe of marriage

marriage tendered, and reciprocal faith plighted in the preſence of an old gentleman-uſher, and waiting-woman, made her commit a fault ſhe had hitherto been thought incapable of, and put this happy ſtranger in poſſeſſion of the moſt beautiful lady of Toledo. For eight days together it was nothing but love, fire and flames, between theſe two lovers. But now they muſt part and tears will ſucceed: Victoria indeed had a right to ſtay him, but the ſtranger pretended he loſt a great deal by not going; however profeſſed, that ſince he had been ſo happy as to win her heart, he would mind no more, either his lawſuit at Madrid, or his preferment at court. Hereupon ſhe grew impatient to have him gone; her paſſion it ſeems not having blinded her reaſon ſo much, as to make her prefer the pleaſure of his company, to that of his advancement. She got new cloaths made for him and his man at Toledo, furniſhed him with as much money as he deſired; and ſo he ſet forward on his journey to Madrid, mounted on a good mule, and his man on another. The poor lady was full of real grief at his departure, and he was no leſs afflicted, or at leaſt pretended to be ſo, with the greateſt hypocriſy in the world. The

ſame day he took his journey, the chamber-maid making his bed, found a picture wrapped in a letter; ſhe carried them immediately to her miſtreſs, who found it to be the portrait of a moſt beautiful young lady; and read the letter, contained theſe words, or others to the ſame effect.

"*Dear Couſin*,

"HERE incloſed I ſend you the picture of the beautiful Elvira de Sylva; but when you ſhall ſee her, you will be apt to confeſs how infinitely the reſemblance falls ſhort of the original; and how much brighter her beauty is than that the painter could draw for her. Her father Don Pedro de Sylva expects you with impatience: the articles of marriage between you and her are already drawn up according to your wiſhes, and, in my opinion, very much to your advantage. All this, I hope, will be ſufficient to haſten your journey. Farewell.

"*Madrid, &c.*

"*Don Antonio de Ribera.*"

This letter was directed to Ferdinand de Ribera at Sevil. You may imagine Victoria's aſtoniſhment at the reading of this

this epiſtle, which, in all probability, could be written to no other than her falſe Lopez de Gongora. She now perceived, but too late, that this ſtranger, whom ſhe had ſo highly and ſo haſtily obliged, had diſguiſed his name; and thereby was fully aſſured of his infidelity. The beauty of the lady in the picture made her feel all the torments of jealouſy; and the articles of marriage already drawn up, almoſt diſtracted her with deſpair. Never was any poor creature more ſenſibly afflicted; her ſighs and tears were faithful interpreters of her ſorrow: miſerable, abandoned woman that I am, ſaid ſhe to herſelf, have I thus long been ſo diſcreet and reſerved, to commit, at laſt, a moſt irreparable fault! And have I refuſed ſo many men of quality of my acquaintance, who would have thought themſelves but too happy in my condeſcenſion, to throw myſelf away upon a ſtranger, who, perhaps, laughs at my eaſy credulity, now he has ruined my fame, and made me for ever miſerable! What will they ſay of me at Toledo! Nay, what will they ſay throughout Spain! Can a young, baſe, cheating pretender be diſcreet? Why did I let him know I loved him, before I was ſure of the

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ſincerity of his heart? Would he have changed his name, if he had meant to keep his flattering promiſes? Or can I hope, after all this, that he will not reveal his eaſy conqueſt over me? What will not my brother be provoked to do to me, for what I have done againſt myſelf? And to what purpoſe is he now courting glory and fame in Flanders, if I meanly diſgrace him thus in Spain? No, no, Victoria, thou muſt do any thing to repair this crime: but before I proceed to vengeance, and deſperate remedies, I muſt try to regain by craft, what I have loſt by imprudence: it will then be time enough to have recourſe to deſperate methods, when all other means prove ineffectual. Victoria had, it ſeems, a great ſpirit, and preſence of mind, ſince ſhe could fix on ſo good a reſolution at ſuch a difficulty. Her old gentleman-uſher, and her waiting-woman, would have both given her advice; but ſhe told them, ſhe knew as much as they could ſay; and that actions, not words, muſt now do her buſineſs. The very ſame day, a couple of carts were laden with houſhold-ſtuff and neceſſaries, Victoria giving out, amongſt her domeſtics, that ſhe had preſſing buſineſs concerning her brother, which called her

to court. She took coach with her ſquire and woman, and haſtened to Madrid, whither her goods were appointed to follow. As ſoon as Victoria arrived there, ſhe enquired for Don Pedro de Sylva's houſe; and being informed whereabouts it was, hired one for herſelf in the ſame ſtreet. Her gentleman-uſher's name was Roderigo Santillane, who, having been bred up from a child by Victoria's father, created in him a love for his miſtreſs, equal to that of a brother. Having much acquaintance in Madrid, where he ſpent his youthful days, he ſoon diſcovered, that Don Pedro de Sylva's daughter was to be wedded to a gentleman of Sevil, named Ferdinand de Ribera; that the match had been negociated by a couſin of Ribera's of the ſame name, and was ſo near a concluſion, that Don Pedro was already providing ſervants for his daughter.

The very next day, Roderigo Santillane, in a plain, but decent garb, Victoria in the habit of a widow of mean condition, accompanied by Beatrix the waiting-woman, who was to perſonate her mother-in-law, and Roderigo's wife, went altogether to Don Pedro's, and deſired to ſpeak with him. Don Pedro received them very civilly, and Roderigo acquaint-

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ed him, with much aſſurance, that he was a decayed gentleman of the mountains of Toledo, who having an only daughter by his firſt wife, which was Victoria, whoſe huſband died not long ſince at Sevil, and finding his own, and his daughter's fortune very low, he had brought her to court in hopes of obtaining ſome good ſervice for her; but, having been informed that Don Pedro was about ſettling his daughter's family againſt her marriage, he hoped it would not appear impertinent that he came to proffer the young widow's ſervice to him, as a perſon well qualified for a duenna to the bride; adding, his daughter's merit gave him the greater confidence to preſent her to him, becauſe he aſſured himſelf that her breeding and good qualities would procure her a little better title to her miſtreſs's favour, than the ſmall ſtock of beauty ſhe had to recommend her.

Before I proceed any further, I muſt advertiſe thoſe that are unacquainted with it, that the ladies in Spain keep duennas in their houſes, and that thoſe duennas are much the ſame with our governantes, or ladies of honour, belonging to perſons of quality: to which I muſt add that the duennas in Spain are ſevere and troubleſome

ſome animals, no leſs dreadful than a domineering mother-in-law is eſteemed among us.

But to go on with my ſtory, Roderigo played his part ſo well, and Victoria appeared ſo beautiful and agreeable in her modeſt and plain attire, and had ſuch a promiſing look in her face, that Don Pedro de Sylva accepted of her immediately to govern his daughter. He proffered Roderigo and his wife an employment in his houſe likewiſe; but he excuſed himſelf, and told him, he had ſome reaſons for not accepting the honour he intended him; but having a houſe in the ſame ſtreet, he would be ready to wait on him at any time he ſhould command it. Thus was Victoria entertained in Don Pedro's houſe, infinitely beloved both by him and his daughter, and conſequently envied by their ſervants.

Don Antonio de Ribera, who had contrived the match between his faithleſs couſin and Don Pedro Sylva's daughter, came often to viſit them. He ſaid his kinſman was on his journey, and had long ſince informed him of his ſetting off from Sevil; but this couſin not yet appearing he was very much perplexed, nor could Don Pedro and Elvira tell what to make of

of his delay. Victoria, it may be imagined, was the moſt concerned. Don Ferdinand, however, was incapable of arriving ſo ſoon as ſhe expected him; for the very ſame day he parted from Victoria, Heaven had, in ſome meaſure, puniſhed his treachery. As he was paſſing through Illeſcas, a fierce dog, running unawares out of a houſe, ſo terribly frightened the mule he rode on, that one of his legs was ſorely bruiſed againſt a wall, he thrown from the creature's back, and his knee put out of joint; which pained him ſo exceedingly, that he could not proſecute his journey. He was ſeven or eight days under the ſurgeon's hands; who being none of the moſt ſkilful, and his ailment growing worſe and worſe, he at length acquainted his couſin with his misfortune, deſiring him withal, to ſend him a horſe-litter. The news of his friend's fall afflicted no leſs, than the knowledge of his being ſo nigh pleaſed them; and Victoria, who ſtill loved him, was not a little diſquieted.

Don Antonio ſent a litter to convey Don Ferdinand to Madrid; where being arrived, whilſt they were providing cloaths for him and his retinue, which was to be very magnificent, he being the eldeſt ſon

of the family, and wealthy enough, the ſurgeons of Madrid, more ſkilful than thoſe at Illeſcas, made him a perfect cure.

Don Pedro de Sylva, and his daughter Elvira, had notice of the day when Don Antonio de Ribera was to bring his couſin Don Ferdinand to them. It is not probable that the young Elvira neglected herſelf upon that occaſion, or that Victoria was without concern at this intended interview. She ſaw her faithleſs lover enter, tricked up like a bridegroom; and if he was ſo charming in a poor naked diſhabille, what muſt he be now in his wedding cloaths? Don Pedro was very well ſatisfied with him, and his daughter muſt have been very nice, had ſhe not been fully pleaſed. The ſervants of the houſe ſtared with all the eyes they had upon their young lady's bridegroom, and every one of the family was over-joyed at the match, except the poor Victoria, whoſe heart you may imagine was oppreſſed with grief. Don Ferdinand was charmed with Elvira's beauty, and confeſſed to his couſin, that ſhe was yet more beautiful than the picture he had given of her with his letter. His firſt compliments diſplayed a great deal of wit, and he very

very ſkilfully avoided thoſe impertinent fooleries, and ſtarched nonſenſe, which moſt men are guilty of, in their firſt addreſſes to a father-in-law and a miſtreſs: after which, Don Pedro de Sylva locked himſelf up in a cloſet with the two kinſmen and a lawyer, to adjuſt ſomewhat that was left unfiniſhed in the articles.

In the mean time, Elvira ſtayed in her chamber, ſurrounded by her women, who all expreſſed their joy at the good mien and noble air of her lover, except Victoria, who ſtood cool and ſilent, whilſt the reſt were in their raptures. Elvira obſerved this, and therefore took her aſide, to tell her, that ſhe admired ſhe ſaid nothing of the happy choice her father had made of a ſon-in-law, who ſeemed ſo deſerving; adding, that, either out of complaiſance or civility, ſhe ought, at leaſt, to wiſh her joy. Madam, replied Victoria, your lover's mien ſpeaks ſo much to his advantage, that it were needleſs for me to add my commendations; the coldneſs you have taken notice of, does not proceed from any indifference; and I were unworthy of the favours you have vouchſafed me, ſhould I not ſhare in every thing that concerns you; and therefore, ſhould be no leſs tranſported with joy at

your marriage, than all the reſt about you are, was I not ſo well acquainted with the gentleman you are about to wed. My own huſband was an inhabitant of Sevil, whoſe houſe was not far from your lover's. He is, I confeſs, of a good family, rich, handſome, and, I believe, a man of wit. In fine, he is worthy a lady, ſuch as you are: but I muſt tell you, madam, if you deſire a man's entire affection, that he cannot beſtow on you, becauſe his heart is divided. I would wave a diſcovery, which may, perhaps, diſpleaſe you; but I ſhould be wanting to my duty, if I did not reveal all I know of Don Ferdinand, in a buſineſs which ſo nearly concerns the happineſs or unhappineſs of your whole life. Elvira was amazed at her duenna's words, and intreated her, not to defer any longer the clearing thoſe doubts ſhe had ſtarted; but being anſwered that it was neither to be done before her women, nor in few words, ſhe pretended to have ſome buſineſs of privacy in her chamber, and ordered her ſervants to withdraw.

As ſoon as they were alone, Victoria told her, that Ferdinand de Ribera was in love at Sevil, with one Lucretia de Monſalva, a very beautiful lady, though of very

very mean fortune, by whom he had three children, upon promiſe of marriage; and that during Ribera's father's life, it was kept ſecret; but after his death, Lucretia having claimed his promiſe, he grew indifferent to her; whereupon ſhe had left the buſineſs to the management of two gentlewomen, her relations, who had made ſo much noiſe at Sevil, that Don Ferdinand, through his friend's perſuaſion, abſented himſelf for a while, to ſhun the rage of Lucretia's relations, who ſought for nothing ſo much as blood and revenge. In this poſture were his affairs, added ſhe, when I left Sevil, which is about a month ago; at which time it was alſo reported, that Don Ferdinand was going to Madrid to be married. Elvira could not forbear aſking, whether that Lucretia was a great beauty? Victoria told her, ſhe wanted nothing but a fortune; and then left her extremely penſive, and firmly reſolved to give her father an immediate account of the diſcovery.

Being now called to entertain her lover, as the buſineſs for which he had retired into the cloſet with her father, was concluded, Elvira went to him, whilſt Victoria ſtayed in the drawing-room; where the ſame fellow came to her that attended

on him, when ſhe ſo generouſly received them into her houſe near Toledo. The ſervant brought a pacquet of letters for his maſter, which he had taken up at the poſt-office from Sevil; and not knowing Victoria, ſo much her widow's weeds diſguiſed her, he deſired to be admitted to the ſpeech of his maſter, to deliver him his letters. She told him, it would be a good while before he could conveniently ſpeak with him; but if he durſt truſt her with his pacquet, ſhe would be ſure to give it him as ſoon as poſſibly ſhe could. The fellow made no ſcruple in the matter, but having left the pacquet in her cuſtody, went about his buſineſs.

Victoria, who was reſolved to leave no ſtone unturned to revenge herſelf, goes up to her own chamber, opens the pacquet, and in a moment ſeals it up again, together with a letter of her own, which ſhe writ in haſte. In the mean time, the two kinſmen having made an end of their viſit, and taken their leave, Elvira, ſeeing the pacquet in her governante's hands, aſked what it was? Victoria coldly anſwered, that Don Ferdinand's ſervant had left a pacquet of ſome letters with her to deliver to his maſter, which ſhe was going to ſend after him, not being in the

the way when he went out. Elvira ſaid, it would give them ſome farther light about the diſcovery ſhe had made, and therefore ſhe would open them. This being what was deſired, Victoria breaks open the ſeal a ſecond time: Elvira looked upon all the letters, and fixing her eye upon one which ſeemed to be writ by a woman, addreſſed to Don Ferdinand de Ribera at Madrid, ſhe read the following lines.

"YOUR abſence, and the news I heard of your marriage at court, will ſoon deprive you of a perſon that valued you above her own life, unleſs you ſuddenly return, and make good your promiſe; which you can neither defer any longer, nor deny me without a manifeſt indifference, or breach of faith. If what I hear be true, that you regard your vows and promiſes ſo little, which you have made both to me and our children, I adviſe you to take care of your life; which my relations are reſolved to take for your treachery, whenever your ungrateful uſage ſhall prompt me to call upon them for my juſt revenge, ſince you enjoy it now only at my requeſt.

"*Sevil, &c.*

"*Lucretia de Monſalva.*"

Elvira having read this letter, was thoroughly perſuaded of the truth of what her governante had told her, and ſhewed it to her father, who was aſtoniſhed to ſee that a gentleman of his quality could be ſo baſe, as to forſake a lady of equal birth with himſelf, after he had had ſo many children by her. He therefore went immediately to a gentleman of Sevil for a farther information, who was a friend of his, and one that had before given him an account of Ferdinand's wealth and circumſtances.

Scarce was he gone from his door, when Don Ferdinand came to enquire for his pacquet, attended by his ſervant, who told him that his miſtreſs's governante had promiſed to deliver it into his hands. He found Elvira alone in the parlour, and told her, that, though the engagement which was between her and him, might excuſe two viſits in one day, yet he now only came for the letters his man told him he had left with her duenna. Elvira freely acknowledged that ſhe had taken them from her, and, urged by curioſity, not doubting but a man of his years had ſome amorous engagements in ſo great a city as Sevil, ſhe opened it; and, though her curioſity afforded her but little ſatiſfaction,

faction, yet had ſhe met with this caution in recompence, That it was dangerous for people to be married together, before they were thoroughly acquainted; adding, ſhe would not debar him any longer of the pleaſure of peruſing his letters; and therefore immediately reſtored him his pacquet, together with the counterfeit letter; and, after making him a ſlight curteſy, left him without waiting for his anſwer.

Don Ferdinand was ſtrangely ſurpriſed at his miſtreſs's diſcourſe. He peruſed the ſuppoſed letter, and quickly perceived it was a trick to hinder his marriage. He addreſſed himſelf to Victoria, who remained in the outward room, and told her, without taking much notice of her face, that either ſome rival, or malicious perſon, had contrived that letter to abuſe him. I a wife in Sevil! cried he with amazement: I children! If this be not the moſt impudent impoſture that ever was ſet on foot, I'll forfeit my head. Victoria told him he might poſſibly be innocent: however, Elvira, in common diſcretion, could do no leſs than make a farther enquiry into the truth; and that therefore the marriage would certainly be put off, till her father Don Pedro could be

be convinced by a gentleman of Sevil, a friend of his (whom he was then gone to ſeek on purpoſe) that this was only a pretended intrigue. With all my heart, anſwered he; and if there be but a lady of the name of Lucretia de Monſalva in all Sevil, let me forfeit the honour and reputation of a gentleman. I muſt, however, intreat you, added he, to let me know, if you are ſo far in your lady's favour, as I ſuppoſe you to be, that I may beſpeak your good offices on this occaſion. Truly, anſwered Victoria, I believe, without vanity, that ſhe will not do any thing at the perſuaſion of another, which ſhe hath refuſed to do at mine: but, however, I know her humour to be ſuch, that ſhe is not eaſily appeaſed, when ſhe thinks herſelf diſobliged: and, as all the hopes of mending my fortune depends on the kindneſs ſhe has for me, I ſhall never offer to contradict her out of complaiſance to you; or hazard her diſpleaſure by endeavouring to diſſuade her from the ill opinion ſhe entertains of your ſincerity. I am but poor, added ſhe; and, not to get any thing, were to loſe a great deal: if what ſhe has promiſed to give me in caſe I marry a ſecond time, ſhould fail, I might live a widow all the reſt of my days; though

though I am yet young enough, and not ſo deformed, but that ſome body or other may like me. But 'tis an old ſaying, and a true one, That without money——She was thus going on with a true governante's tedious tale (for to act her part to the life, ſhe muſt talk a great deal) when Don Ferdinand interrupting her, ſaid, Do me but one piece of ſervice I ſhall require of you, and I will put you above the hopes of your miſtreſs's reward: and, added he, to convince you that my promiſes are not empty words, give me but pen, ink, and paper, and you ſhall immediately have what you will under my hand. Jeſu! Signior, ſaid the feigned governante, a gentleman's word is as good as his bond—but, to obey you, I will fetch you what you deſire; and returning again with materials enough to have drawn a bond for a million of gold, Don Ferdinand was ſo gallant, or at leaſt had ſuch a month's mind to Elvira, that he ſigned her a blank, leaving her to fill it up as ſhe pleaſed, thereby to engage her to ſerve him with the greater zeal. This raiſed Victoria up to the clouds: ſhe promiſed wonders to Don Ferdinand, and moreover told him, ſhe wiſhed herſelf the unhappieſt of all her ſex, if ſhe did not

act

act in this buſineſs, as if ſhe herſelf had been a party concerned; in which word ſhe ſpoke a great truth.

Don Ferdinand left her full of hopes; and Roderigo Santillane, who went for her father, being come to viſit her, to learn how her intrigue advanced, ſhe gave him an account of all, ſhewed him the ſubſcribed blank; and they united in returning their thanks to Heaven, for the promiſed re-eſtabliſhment of their happineſs. To loſe no time, he went home to the houſe that Victoria had hired, not far from Don Pedro's, as I have before related, where he filled up the black Don Ferdinand had given, with a promiſe of marriage atteſted by witneſſes, and dated about the ſame time that Victoria received this faithleſs man into her country-houſe. He was as ſkilful a pen-man as any in Spain, and had ſtudied Don Ferdinand's hand ſo exactly well in a copy of verſes of his own writing, that even Don Ferdinand himſelf would have been miſtaken in the forgery, and thought it to have been his own hand.

Don Pedro de Sylva could not meet with the gentleman whom he ſought to be informed by, about Don Ferdinand's amours, therefore left a note for him, and

ſo

ſo came back to his houſe; where that ſame night Elvira unboſomed her ſecrets to her governante, and vowed, ſhe would ſooner diſobey her father, than ever marry Don Ferdinand; confeſſing likewiſe, that ſhe had been pre-ingaged to one Don Diego de Maradas a long while before, and had in all reaſon complied enough with her father's commands and her own duty, by putting a conſtraint on her inclinations, to ſatisfy him; but ſince Heaven had ordered it ſo, that Ferdinand's treachery was diſcovered, ſhe thought, by refuſing him, ſhe obeyed the Divine pleaſure, which ſeemed to allot her another huſband. You may imagine Victoria fortified Elvira in theſe good reſolutions, and ſpoke quite contrary to Don Ferdinand's expectations. Don Diego de Maradas, ſaid then Elvira to her, is much diſſatisfied with me, for having paid this obedience to my father; but the leaſt inviting look from me, will, however, be ſure to bring him back, was he at as great a diſtance from me, as Don Ferdinand is from his Lucretia. Write to him, madam, ſaid Victoria, and I will be your meſſenger.

Elvira was overjoyed to find her governeſs ſo favourable to her deſigns; ſhe com-

commanded the coach to be ready for Victoria, who immediately went away with a billet-deaux for Don Diego; and being alighted at her father Santillane's ſent the coach back again, telling the coachman, ſhe would walk the reſt of the way, whither ſhe deſigned to go. Honeſt Santillane ſhewed her the promiſe of marriage he had drawn up; and Victoria immediately wrote two little notes; one to Don Diego de Maradas; the other to Don Pedro de Sylva, her lady's father; wherein, ſhe intreated both of them to repair to her houſe about buſineſs, with the direction where ſhe dwelt, and ſubſcribed herſelf Victoria Portocarrero.

Whilſt theſe notes were carrying, Victoria ſtrips off her black weeds, puts on very rich cloaths, and dreſſed her head as nicely as if ſhe had been going to court. Don Diego de Maradas came a while after, to know what concern a lady, to whom he was a perfect ſtranger, could have with him. She received him very civilly; and they were ſcarce ſet down, when it was told her, that Don Pedro de Sylva was come likewiſe to wait upon her. She intreated Don Diego to conceal himſelf in her alcove, aſſuring him, it concerned him very much to hear the diſcourſe

diſcourſe ſhe ſhould have with Don Pedro. He readily complied with the deſire of a lady of ſo much beauty, and ſo good a mien; and Don Pedro was admitted into Victoria's chamber, without knowing her; ſo much had the richneſs of her dreſs changed her face, and heightened her majeſtic air. She deſired him to place himſelf in a chair, whence Don Diego might eaſily hear all they ſaid, and then ſhe began in theſe words: I think, ſir, I ought, in the firſt place, to inform you who I am; becauſe, in all probability, you are impatient to know it. I am of the family of the Portocarrero's, born in the city of Toledo, where I was married at the age of ſixteen, and became a widow at about ſix months after. My father was a knight of the order of Saint Jago, and my brothers of the order of Calla-trava. Then your father, ſaid Don Pedro, interrupting her, was my intimate friend. What you tell me rejoices me extremely, anſwered Victoria, for I ſhall have occa-ſion for a great many friends in the affair I deſign to acquaint you with. After this ſhe informed Don Pedro of all that paſſed between her and Don Ferdinand, and put into his hands the promiſe of marriage counterfeited by Santillane. He had

had no ſooner read it, but ſhe went on thus: You know, ſir, what honour obliges perſons of my quality to do in theſe caſes: for, though juſtice ſhould be partially denied me, yet have my friends power and credit enough to proſecute my intereſt to the higheſt. I thought, ſir, it became me to let you know my pretenſions, that you might put a ſtop to the match you had deſigned for your daughter. She deſerves better than to be thrown away upon a faithleſs man; and I believe you are more diſcreet, than to procure for her an huſband, whom another has a right to diſpute with her. Was he a grandee of Spain, replied Don Pedro, I would have nothing to do with him if he was ſo unjuſt and falſe as you ſay he is: I ſhall therefore not only refuſe him my daughter, but likewiſe forbid him my houſe. As for yourſelf, madam, continued he, both my friends and intereſt are at your ſervice. I had notice given me before, that he was a man who purſued his pleaſure, even to the hazard of his reputation; and, being of that temper, though you had no title to him, yet ſhould he never have my daughter, for whom I hope to obtain a huſband in the court of Spain.

Don

Don Pedro perceiving ſhe had no more to ſay to him, took his leave of Victoria; and then ſhe called Don Diego out of the alcove, where he had over-heard all the converſation ſhe had with her miſtreſs's father. This ſpared her the labour of repeating her ſtory to him: ſhe delivered Elvira's letter to him, which tranſported him with joy; and, leſt he ſhould be in pain to know how ſhe came by it, ſhe entruſted him with her metamorphoſis into a duenna, knowing he was as much concerned as herſelf to keep it ſecret. Don Diego, before he left Victoria, wrote an anſwer to his miſtreſs's letter, wherein the infinite joy he expreſſed for his revived hopes, plainly diſcovered the real affliction he had been in ever ſince he thought her loſt. He then parted from the fair widow, who preſently put on her governante's habit, and returned to Don Pedro's.

In the interim Don Ferdinand de Ribera was come to wait upon his miſtreſs, and had taken his couſin Don Antonio along with him, to endeavour to falſify thoſe aſperſions, which had been charged againſt him by Victoria's feigned letter. Don Pedro found them with his daughter, who knew not what to anſwer, when they both deſired

deſired no better juſtification, than only a due enquiry whether there ever was in Sevil ſuch a lady as Lucretia de Monſalva. They renewed the ſame plea to Don Pedro, to clear Don Ferdinand; to which he anſwered, That if the engagement with the lady of Sevil, was an impoſition, it was ſo much the eaſier to be cleared; but that he came from a lady of Toledo, named Victoria Portocarrero, to whom Don Ferdinand had promiſed marriage, and to whom he was ſtill more engaged, by having been ſo generouſly aſſiſted by her, when a meer ſtranger to her; which he could not deny, ſince ſhe had under his hand and ſeal a promiſe of marriage; adding withall, that a perſon of honour ought not to court a wife at Madrid, whilſt he had one already at Toledo. At theſe words he ſhewed the two couſins the promiſe of marriage in due form. Don Antonio knew his couſin's writing; and Don Ferdinand miſtaking it, though he was confident he had never given any ſuch, yet was quite confounded at the ſight of it. Thus convinced of his guilt, after wiſhing the couſins a diſtant farewell, the father and daughter withdrew.

Don Antonio now quarrelled with Ferdinand for employing him in this treaty, when

when he had another on foot before. However, they took coach together; and Don Antonio having made him confeſs his unhandſome proceeding with Victoria, he reproached him a thouſand times with the heinouſneſs of the fact, and alſo repreſented to him the evil conſequence that was like to attend it. He told him, he muſt not think of getting another wife either at Madrid or in any part of Spain, but believe himſelf happy if he could get off by marrying Victoria, without forfeiting his life with his honour. Victoria's brother being a perſon not uſed to put up ſuch affronts without full ſatisfaction, it was Don Ferdinand's part to be ſilent whilſt his couſin continued his reproaches. His conſcience ſufficiently accuſed him of treachery and falſehood to a lady who had ſo highly obliged him; but this promiſe of marriage, however, almoſt diſtracted him, not knowing by what ſtrange inchantment they had made him grant it. Victoria being come back to Don Pedro's in her widow's weeds, delivered Don Diego's letter to Elvira, who told her that the two kinſmen had been there to juſtify themſelves; but that Don Ferdinand was charged with other lewd practices than his amour with the lady of Sevil: and afterwards

afterwards related what Victoria knew better than herſelf: though ſhe pretended to admire at and deteſt Don Ferdinand's baſeneſs.

The ſame day Elvira was invited to a play at the houſe of one of her relations. Victoria, whoſe thoughts ſtill ran upon her own affairs, hoped, if Elvira would follow her counſel, that this play might prove favourable to her deſign. She told her young lady, that if ſhe had a mind to meet her lover Don Diego, there was nothing more eaſy, her father's houſe being the moſt convenient that could be; and that ſince the play was not to begin till midnight, ſhe might go out a little earlier, and have time enough to ſpeak with Don Diego, and after go to her relation's. Elvira, who really loved Don Diego, and had conſented to marry Don Ferdinand merely out of reſpect to her father's commands, ſhewed no reluctance to what Victoria had propoſed. They therefore took coach as ſoon as ever Don Pedro was gone to bed, and went to Victoria's houſe. Santillane, as maſter of the family, and Beatrix, who perſonated the mother-in-law, welcomed them very kindly. Elvira wrote a billet to Don Diego, which was delivered immediately;

mediately; whilſt Victoria diſpatched another privately to Don Ferdinand in Elvira's name, to let him know it was in his power to complete the match; on which his extraordinary merit engaged her to adventure, as not deſiring to make herſelf unhappy for ever by loſing him, only to pleaſe a father's crabbed ſuſpicious humour. In the ſame note ſhe gave him ſuch particular directions how to find the houſe, that it was impoſſible he ſhould miſs it. This note was carried a little while after that other from Elvira to Don Diego. Victoria wrote likewiſe a third, which Santillane carried himſelf to Don Pedro de Sylva; by which ſhe informed him, as a truſty governante, that his daughter, inſtead of going to the play, would needs ſtop at her father's houſe, and had ſent for Don Ferdinand to conſummate her nuptials with him; which ſhe believing to be contrary to his conſent, thought herſelf obliged to give him notice of it, to the end that he might be ſenſible he was not at all miſtaken in the good opinion he had entertained of her honeſty, when he choſe her for his daughter's governante. Santillane likewiſe told Don Pedro, that his daughter had charged him not to come thither by

any means without bringing an alguazil with him, which is an officer much reſembling a commiſſary at Paris.

Don Pedro being then in bed, haſtened to put on his cloaths in a great paſſion. But whilſt he is dreſſing, and ſending for a commiſſary, let us go back and ſee what they are doing at Victoria's. By good fortune the notes came ſafe to each of the lover's hands. Don Diego, who had received his firſt, came firſt to the aſſignation. Victoria met him at the door, and conducted him into a chamber, where ſhe left him with Elvira. I will not trouble you with the relation of all the endearments that paſſed betwixt theſe two young lovers; and, if I would, Don Ferdinand's knocking at the door will not give me time to do it. Victoria lets him in herſelf; and, after having magnified the great ſervice ſhe had done him on this occaſion, for which the amorous ſpark returned her a thouſand thanks, promiſing he would yet do more for her than all his former promiſes engaged him to, ſhe lead him into a chamber, where ſhe deſired him to ſtay awhile for Elvira, who was coming, and ſo locked him in without light; telling him, his miſtreſs would needs have it ſo, but that it would not

not be long before he ſhould be viſible again; adding, that a young lady's modeſty would not ſuffer her to bear, without bluſhing, the ſight of a man for whom ſhe had committed ſo bold an action. This done, Victoria, with all the haſte ſhe could, dreſſed herſelf as well and as nicely as the ſhort time would permit. She then went into the chamber where Don Ferdinand was, who had not the leaſt ſuſpicion but that ſhe was Elvira, being no leſs young than ſhe, and having ſuch perfumes about her, according to the Spaniſh faſhion, as would have made a chamber-maid paſs for a woman of quality.

In this interim, Don Pedro, the alguazil and Santillane arrived, and they entered the chamber where Elvira was in private with her lover. The happy pair were now a little ſurprized at this viſit; and Don Pedro, blinded by the firſt tranſports of his paſſion, was ready to run the perſon through whom he took for Don Ferdinand. The commiſſary, however, diſcovering it was not he, but Don Diego, held his arm, bidding him have a care what he did; ſince it was not Don Ferdinand de Ribera who was with his daughter, but Don Diego de Maradas, a

perſon of no leſs quality and riches than the other. Don Pedro at this, behaved himſelf like a diſcreet gentleman, and raiſed his daughter, who had caſt herſelf at his feet. He wiſely conſidered, that if he ſhould croſs her inclination, by oppoſing this match, he would create both her and himſelf a great deal of trouble; and, beſides, could not pitch upon a better ſon-in-law, though he had the chuſing of one himſelf.

Santillane now deſired Don Pedro, the alguazil, and all that were with them in the room, to follow him; when he led them to the chamber where Don Ferdinand was ſhut up with Victoria. They commanded the door to be opened in the king's name: at which command Don Ferdinand let them in; and ſeeing Don Pedro, attended by the commiſſary, told them, with a great deal of confidence, that he was with his wife Elvira de Sylva. Don Pedro anſwered, he was miſtaken, his daughter being married to another; and as for you, added he, you cannot deny but that Victoria Portocarrero is your lawful wife. Victoria then diſcovered herſelf to her faithleſs gallant, who remained full of confuſion. She expoſtulated on his ingratitude with him; to whom his

his ſilence was his only plea, as well as to the commiſſary, who told him he could do no leſs than carry him to priſon. In ſhort, his remorſe of conſcience, and fear of impriſonment, together with Don Pedro's exhortations, who minded him of his honour and reputation, joined to Victoria's tears and beauty, nothing inferior to that of Elvira, and, above all the reſt, ſome ſparks of generoſity ſtill remaining in his heart, notwithſtanding his debaucheries and youthful follies, made him at length, with reaſon and juſtice, yield to Victoria's engaging charms: he tenderly embraced her; and ſhe was ſo near ſwooning away in his arms, that the reviving tranſports of his kiſſes could alone preſerve her. Don Pedro, Don Diego and fair Elvira, ſhared in Victoria's happineſs; and Santillane and Beatrix were ready to die for joy. Don Pedro very much commended Don Ferdinand, for thus nobly repairing the wrongs he had committed. The two young ladies embraced each other, with as great teſtimonies of love as if they had hugged their own huſbands. Don Diego de Maradas made a thouſand proteſtations of his obedience to his father-in-law, or he that ſhould be ſo in a ſhort time.

Don Pedro, before he went home with his daughter, made them promiſe, that they would all come and dine the next day at his houſe; where, for fifteen days together, he endeavoured, by ſolemn rejoicings, to diſpel the thoughts of their paſt troubles. The alguazil was invited too, and promiſed to be there: Don Pedro took him along with him; and Don Ferdinand remained with Victoria, who now had as much reaſon to bleſs her good fortune, as ſhe formerly had to curſe her evil one.

CHAP. XXIII.

An unexpected misfortune, which prevented the acting of the play.

INEZILLA having recounted her novel with an admirable grace, Roquebrune was ſo pleaſed with it, that he caught up her hand, and kiſſed it whether ſhe would or not. She told him in Spaniſh, That great men and fools had the liberty to do any thing; for which, Rancour gave her thanks in his heart. Though the Spaniſh lady's face began to feel the harrow of Time, yet there were many

many fine remains of her former beauty to be ſeen: but had ſhe been leſs handſome, her wit had made her preferable to many younger beauties; for all that heard the ſtory agree in this; that ſhe had made it very entertaining in a language ſhe was yet but a novice in, being often obliged to intermix Spaniſh and Italian with it, to expreſs her meaning. Stella told her, that, inſtead of begging an excuſe for putting her to the trouble of ſpeaking ſo long, ſhe expected her thanks for giving her ſo fair an occaſion to ſhew her extraordinary wit. The reſt of the afternoon was ſpent in converſation in the garden, which was full of ladies and many citizens of note, till ſupper-time. They ſupped after the manner of Mans; that is to ſay, make very good cheer; which being over, every one took their places to ſee the play: but, how whimſical is fortune! Madam Cave and her daughter were now miſſing. The ſervants were ſent to ſeek them; and it was above half an hour before any tidings came. At laſt they heard a great noiſe without the hall; and preſently after in came Cave, with diſhevelled hair, her face bloody and bruiſed, and crying out like a diſtracted creature, that her

daughter had been ſtolen. Her ſobs and ſighs ſo interrupted her ſpeech, that it was a long time before ſhe could make the company underſtand that a couple of ſtrangers, being got through a back door into the garden, where ſhe and her daughter were rehearſing their parts, one of them ſeized upon her, whoſe eyes ſhe had almoſt ſcratched out, while two others took away her daughter by force; when the ſame villain who put her into that ſad condition they ſaw, mounted on horſeback, and followed his comrades, one of whom held Angelica before him. She told them likewiſe ſhe had purſued them as far as ſhe could, crying out, A rape; but finding nobody to be within hearing, ſhe haſtened back again to the houſe to beg their aſſiſtance. With theſe laſt words ſhe ſhed ſuch a flood of tears, as moved all the beholders with pity. Deſtiny got preſently on the back of a horſe, on which Ragotin was juſt then arrived from Mans (but whether or no it was the ſame that threw him in the morning, I cannot juſtly tell) many other young men mounted the horſes they could lay their hands on, and rode after Deſtiny, who was got a good way before them. Rancour and Olive marched on foot, with

with their ſwords in their hands, in the rear of the horſe; and Roquebrune ſtayed with Stella and Inezilla, who were endeavouring to comfort Cave as well as they could. Some found fault with him, for not going along with the reſt, aſcribing it to want of courage; but others, more favourable, have commended his diſcretion, for ſtaying with the women while there was the leaſt probability of danger.

In the mean time, the gueſts were reduced to change their comedy to dancing; and having no fidlers, becauſe they had expected a play, they tripped it about to the ſinging of ſome of the company. Poor Cave found herſelf ſo diſordered, that ſhe went to bed in one of their dreſſing-chambers, and Stella took as much care of her, as if ſhe had been her own mother, nor was Inezilla leſs officious. The indiſpoſed woman at length deſired they would leave her to herſelf; whereupon, Roquebrune led the two ladies into the hall to the reſt of the company; where they were ſcarcely ſat down, before one of the houſe-maids came to tell Stella that Cave deſired to ſpeak with her; ſhe therefore, promiſing the poet and Spaniſh lady to return immediately, went to her. It

is probable, that Roquebrune, if he had any wit in him, made uſe of that opportunity to acquaint the fair Inezilla with his neceſſities.

As ſoon as Cave ſaw Stella, ſhe deſired her to make the door faſt, and come to her bed-ſide. This being complied with, the firſt thing ſhe did was to weep afreſh, and then laying hold of Stella's hands, ſhe bathed them with tears, and groaned and ſobbed in a moſt lamentable manner. Stella endeavoured to comfort her, giving her hopes that her daughter would ſoon be recovered again, as her raviſhers were purſued by ſo many people. I wiſh ſhe may never return, ſaid Cave, weeping ſtill more and more; I wiſh ſhe may never be found, repeated ſhe again, and that this was all my grief: but I muſt blame her moſt; nay, I muſt, and curſe the hour I brought her into the world. Look here, ſaid ſhe, putting a paper into Stella's hands; look and ſatisfy yourſelf, what a fine companion you have had; and read in this letter the ſentence of my death, and my child's infamy. Here Cave began weeping again, while Stella peruſed the following note; which you you may read if you think fit.

" YOU

"YOU ought not to doubt the truth of what I have often told you, about my quality and fortune, ſince there is no probability that I ſhould deceive a perſon, to whom I cannot recommend myſelf but by my ſincerity. This, fair Angelica, is the only way by which I can merit your favour; and therefore you may ſafely promiſe to grant my requeſt, which I cannot, nor ſhall, deſire to obtain, till I have convinced you of my reality."

As ſoon as ſhe had peruſed the letter, Cave aſked her if ſhe knew the hand? As well as my own, replied Stella: it is Leander's, my brother's ſervant, who writes out all our parts. This is the traitor that will break my heart, ſaid the poor woman; ſee if he has not contrived it fairly, added ſhe, giving another letter of the ſame Leander's writing into madam Stella's hands; which you may read as follows, word for word.

"It reſts only in you to complete my happineſs, by continning in the ſame reſolution you were in two days ſince. My father's tenant, who is uſed to ſupply me with money, has ſent me a hundred piſtoles, and a brace of good horſes, which will be more than ſufficient to carry us both into England; and being there,

I am much deceived, if a father, who loves his only ſon more than his own life, doth not quickly condeſcend to grant all his deſires, to make him return again."

Well, ſaid Cave, what think you now of your companion, and your brother's ſervant? What think you of that girl, whom I have bred up with ſo much care; and that young fellow, whoſe wit and diſcretion we have ſo often admired? My greateſt wonder is, that they were never obſerved to ſpeak to one another; and that my daughter's ſprightly humour ſeemed not in the leaſt to incline her to love; and yet ſhe is in love, my deareſt Stella; and ſo deſparately, that it diſcovers as much madneſs as affection. I found her this very day writing to her Leander, in ſuch paſſionate expreſſions, that, if I had not ſurprized her myſelf, I could never have believed it. You never have heard her ſpeak ſuch language yet: ah! had I not torn her letters in my fury, you would have been convinced that, at ſixteen, ſhe knows as much as thoſe who have practiſed coquetry all their lives. I carried her aſide into the grove, whence ſhe was taken from me, to chide her for the ill returns ſhe had made me, for all the pains and trouble I had undergone

on

on her account. I will acquaint you with my ſufferings, added ſhe, and then judge you, whether ever any daughter was more obliged to love her mother. Stella knew not what to anſwer to theſe juſt complaints; and beſides, it was wiſdom to let her affliction take its courſe only. Saying if he was ſo fond of the daughter, why ſhould he abuſe the mother? Nay, I cannot tell, anſwered Cave; for one of his company, who had laid hold on me, beat me unmercifully; nay, ſtruck me ſeveral times, after I had done ſtruggling with him. Beſides, if he be as rich as he pretends, why does he ſteal away my child? Cave thus continued to lament, Stella ſtill comforting her as well as ſhe could. The maſter of the houſe came to know how ſhe did, and to acquaint her that there was a coach ready at her ſervice, if ſhe deſired to return to Mans; but ſhe begged the liberty to remain there that night, to which he readily conſented. Stella ſtayed there alſo to keep her company, while ſome ladies of Mans took Inezilla into a coach with them, ſhe being unwilling to ſtay longer from her huſband. Roquebrune, who could not civily leave the two actreſſes, was very ſorry he could not wait upon Inezilla;

Inezilla; but we cannot have every thing we deſire in this world, therefore he muſt be contented.

CHAP. XXIV.

And that's all.

THE radiant ſun ſhone perpendicularly upon our Antipodes, and lent no more light to his ſiſter than ſhe had need of to guide her ſteps in a very dark night. A profound ſilence overſpread all the earth, unleſs where critics, owls, or ſerenading fools are found. In ſhort, all nature lay huſhed in ſleep (or, at leaſt, all nature ought to have been aſleep) except ſome poets, who had cramp verſes to meaſure; ſome unfortunate lovers, who anticipated their own hell; and all other animals both rational and irrational, who had that night any thing elſe to do. It were needleſs to tell you, Deſtiny was one of thoſe that did not ſleep, no more than the raviſhers of Angelica, whom he purſued as faſt as he could gallop, though his way was often obſcured by the officious clouds, which robbed the earth of the feeble light of the moon.

moon. Deſtiny had a tender love for Mrs. Cave, both becauſe ſhe deſerved it, and becauſe he was ſecure of her affections; nor was her daughter leſs dear to him; for miſtreſs Stella being obliged to continue on the ſtage, he could not have found in all the ſtrolling companies throughout the kingdom, two women more virtuous than they, and fitter for her companions. Not but that ſome of their profeſſion are virtuous; yet, according to the general opinion of the world, who, perhaps, however, may be miſtaken, they have leſs of virtue than of paint or old embroidery. But to go on with our proper buſineſs: our generous ſtroller gallopped after thoſe raviſhers, with more ſwiftneſs and animoſity, than the Lapythæ did after the Centaurs. He firſt went through a long walk, into which opened the garden-door, from whence Angelica had been carried away; and having gallopped awhile, ſtruck at a venture into a little dirty lane. This lane was full of wheel-tracks and ſtones, and though it was moon-ſhine, yet the darkneſs was ſuch, that Deſtiny could not perſuade his ſteed to go faſter than a broken pace. He was inwardly curſing this crabbed way, when he felt either a man or a devil

devil leaping on horſeback behind him, and claſping his hands about his neck. Deſtiny was terribly frightened, and his horſe ſo much ſtartled, that he had certainly thrown his rider, had not the phantom who inveſted him within his arms, kept him firm on the ſaddle. His horſe run away with him, like a horſe in a fright, while Deſtiny continued to ſpur, not knowing what he did, amazed to feel two naked arms about his neck, and juſt at his cheek a cold face, which breathed time to the cadence of their motion. The race proved long, as the lane was not a ſhort one: at laſt, at the entrance upon a heath, the horſe abated his impetuous courſe, and Deſtiny his fear; for cuſtom brings us by degrees to bear with the moſt frightful things. The moon now ſhone with a clearer light, on purpoſe to let him ſee, that he had a large man ſtark naked behind him, and a face next to his, as frightful as the devil. He did not aſk who he was, (whether out of good manners or not I cannot tell) but ſtill kept his horſe on a gallop, though by this time he too began to breathe ſhort and thick; but when it was leaſt expected, the hind rider dropped off on the ground, and fell a laughing.

laughing. Deſtiny put on his horſe full faſt, and looking behind him, ſaw this phantom running as faſt as he could towards the place from whence he came. Deſtiny confeſſed ſince, that no man could be more frightened than he was at that time. About a hundred ſteps farther, he came to a great road, that led him to a hamlet, where he found all the dogs awake, which made him think, that thoſe he purſued might have gone that way. In order to be informed, he did all he could to rouze the inhabitants of three or four houſes that ſtood on the road, but could not prevail; nay, he was inſulted and barked at by the dogs to boot. At length, hearing a child cry in the laſt houſe he met with, he cauſed the door to be opened with ſevere threats, and there learnt of a woman, trembling in her ſmock, that ſome troopers had gone through their town juſt before, carrying with them a lady who wept like a child, and that they had much ado to ſtill her noiſe. He told the ſame woman the adventure he had with the naked man; and ſhe informed him, that he was a peaſant of their village who was run mad, and roved up and down. However, what this woman told him about thoſe troopers

who

who went through that town, encouraged him to go farther, and make him requeſt his ſteed to mend his pace. I will not recount how often he ſtumbled, and was frighted at his own ſhadow: it is enough to inform you, that Deſtiny loſt his way through a wood, and, riding ſometimes in the dark, and ſometimes in the moonſhine, at laſt met with break of day near a country farm, where he thought fit to let his horſe feed, and where we will leave him for the preſent.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the Boots.

WHILST Deſtiny was purſuing out his way in the dark, in chaſe of thoſe that had ſtolen Angelica, Rancour, and Olive, who did not take her rape ſo much to heart, run not quite ſo faſt as he; and beſides, as they were on foot, it therefore could not be expected that they could go far; wherefore, having found in the next village an inn ſtill open, they went in there and aſked for a bed. The houſe being full, they were ſhewn up into a room, where a perſon lay, (either a gentleman

gentleman or plebeian, I can't tell which) who had ſupped in the inn; and being upon buſineſs which required haſte, but which never came to my knowledge, intended to be gone by break of day. The arrival of our ſtrollers did not favour his deſign of getting betimes on horſeback; for they waked him out of his firſt ſleep, for which, perhaps, he curſed them in his heart: yet the ſight of two men that looked ſomething like gentlemen, was undoubtedly the reaſon why he did not complain aloud. Rancour, whoſe behaviour was tolerably genteel, firſt begged his pardon for their interrupting his repoſe, and then aſked him from whence he came. He told him from Anjou, and was going to Normandy, about buſineſs that required haſte. Rancour went on with his queſtions while he was undreſſing himſelf, and the ſheets airing; but as they were all impertinent, and of no benefit to either, eſpecially the poor man whom he had waked, he was deſired to forbear, and ſuffer him to go to ſleep. Rancour begged his pardon heartily, and, at the ſame time, ſelf-love baniſhing the love of his neighbour out of his breaſt, he reſolved to appropriate to his uſe a pair of new boots, which the oſtler's

oſtler's boy had brought into the room, after having cleaned them. Olive, who at that time had only a mind to ſleep, went into bed, whilſt Rancour ſet by the fire, not ſo much to ſee the faggot they had lighted burnt out, as to ſatisfy his noble ambition, of having a new pair of boots. As ſoon therefore as he thought the man whom he was about to rob, was faſt aſleep, he took his boots, not forgetting his ſhirts, which ſtood at the bed's-feet; and having put them on without ſtockings, went thus booted and ſpurred into bed to Olive. It is probable he lay as near the bed-ſide as he could, leſt his armed legs might touch the naked ones of his bed-fellow, who would, in ſuch caſe, undoubtedly have raiſed a noiſe about this new way of lying betwixt ſheets, and by that means make his plot miſcarry. The remaining part of the night was pretty quiet: Rancour ſlept, or at leaſt diſſembled ſleep. The cocks crew; day came, and the man who lay in the ſame room, having ordered a fire to be kindled, roſe and began to dreſs. When he went to put on his boots, a maid offered him Rancour's old ones, which he flung down with contempt: the maid obſtinately maintained they were his; whereupon he

fell

fell into a great paſſion, and made a deviliſh noiſe. The inn-keeper came up upon this occaſion, and ſwore, upon the faith of an honeſt hoſt, that there were no other boots beſides his, not only in his houſe, but alſo in all the village, the parſon himſelf never going on horſeback. Upon this he began to entertain him with the good qualities of the parſon, and to tell him how he came by his living, and how long he had been in poſſeſſion of it. The inn-keeper's idle talk made the traveller loſe all patience. In the mean time Rancour and Olive, who had waked at the noiſe, took cognizance of the matter; Rancour exaggerated the enormity and heinouſneſs of the fact, and told the inn-keeper, it was a very bad affair. I care no more for a pair of new boots, than for an old pair of ſhoes, ſaid the poor bootleſs man to Rancour, were it not that I am upon buſineſs of great importance, for a man of quality, whom I would chuſe to ſerve before my own father; and if I could buy other boots, I'd give any price for them, were they never ſo bad. Rancour, who ſat up in the bed, ſhrugged up now and then his ſhoulders, and anſwered him nothing, keeping his eyes ſtill fixed on the inn-

keeper

keeper, his maid, and the wretch that loſt them. The poor man in the mean time began to fret like a madman, and perhaps deſigned to hang himſelf, when Rancour, out of an unexampled and unwonted generoſity, cried aloud, thruſting himſelf into the bed, like one who was almoſt dead for want of ſleep, Zounds, ſir, don't keep ſuch a noiſe about your boots, but rather take mine, ſo you will but let us ſleep, as we did you laſt night. The unfortunate man, who now ceaſed to be ſo ſince he had found a pair of boots, had much ado to believe his own ears. He muſtered up a deal of nonſenſe to return thanks, and uttered them ſo paſſionately, that Rancour feared leſt he ſhould come at laſt and embrace him. He therefore cried out in a great paſſion, ſwearing moſt heartily, Zounds, ſir, what a troubleſome fellow you are, both when you loſe your boots, and when you thank thoſe that furniſh you again. Once more, take mine in God's name; and all I aſk for them, is only that you would let me ſleep, or elſe give me my boots again, and then make as much noiſe as you pleaſe. He began to open his mouth in order to reply, when Rancour cried out, Good God! let me ſleep, or let me have

have my boots, one or the other. The inn-keeper, who by this time had a great reſpect for Rancour, from his imperious way of ſpeaking, thruſt his gueſt out of the chamber, well knowing that he would have the laſt word, like one who was highly thankful for a pair of boots ſo generouſly beſtowed: however, he was obliged to leave the room, and go into the kitchen to put on his boots, when Rancour began to ſleep with more tranquility than he had done in the night, his ſleepy faculty not being now diſturbed, either by his wakeful deſire of ſtealing a pair of boots, or the fear of being taken in the fact. As for Olive, who had made a better uſe of his time, he got up early, called for ſome wine, and fell a drinking, which was the beſt thing he could do. Rancour ſlept till eleven, and, as he was dreſſing, Ragotin happened to come into the room. He had been that morning viſiting the actreſſes at their toilet, and Stella having told him ſhe had but little reaſon to think him one of their friends, ſince he did not go after her companion as well as the reſt, he promiſed not to return to Mans till he had learned news of her: but not finding a horſe, either for love or money, he could never

never have kept his promiſe, had not a miller lent him his mule, which he mounted without boots, and ſo arrived (as I ſaid before) at the village where the two ſtrollers had lain. Rancour had a ſtrange ready wit; for he no ſooner ſaw Ragotin in ſhoes, but he thought fortune had favoured him with an opportunity of concealing his theft, which he was before much in pain to do. Wherefore he preſently deſired him to lend him his ſhoes, and to take his boots, which, being new, hurt one of his feet. Ragotin accepted his propoſal with much joy, for as he rid along, the tongue of the ſtirrup-buckle had torn his ſtockings, which made him heartily to wiſh for a pair of boots. Now, to acknowledge the favour in ſome meaſure, he paid for the player's dinner, as well as his own and his mule's. And becauſe ſince his late fall (when the carabine went off betwixt his legs) he had made an oath never to beſtride again the back of any ſaddle-beaſt, without firſt taking care of his ſafety, he therefore made uſe of a block; yet, with all this precaution, he had much ado to get into the pack-ſaddle. His brain was too mercurial to be judicious; a ſign of which was his turning up the tops of his boots to his waiſt, which hindered

hindered him from having the free uſe of his hams, which naturally were none of the moſt vigorous. However, Ragotin being mounted, and the ſtrollers on foot, they ſet forwards on their journey, and followed the next road they came to. As they were going along, Ragotin opened his mind to the ſtrollers, and told them his deſign of turning player, and acting in their company; proteſting that though he did not doubt in a ſhort time he ſhould prove the beſt actor in the kingdom, yet he did not expect any profit from his profeſſion; but what he did was only out of curioſity, and to let the world know, he was fit for any thing he had a mind to undertake. Rancour and Olive fortified him inh is noble deſign, and, what with commending and encouraging him, they put him at laſt into ſo good a humour, that from his high ſtation, he began to repeat verſes out of Theophilus's Pyramus and Thiſbe. Certain peaſants who attended a loaden cart, and were going the ſame way, hearing him ſpeak with the emphaſis of an enthuſiaſt, thought he was preaching; and while he rehearſed his heroics, they walked cap in hand before him, reſpecting him like a high-way preacher.

CHAP. XXVI.

The hiſtory of Mrs. Cave.

THE two women-ſtrollers, whom we left in the houſe from whence Angelica had been ſtolen, had no better a night's reſt than Deſtiny. Stella went into the ſame bed with Mrs. Cave; both not to leave her alone in her deſpair, and to endeavour by gentle perſuaſions to alleviate her affliction. At laſt, finding ſo juſt a grief did not want reaſons to defend itſelf, ſhe uſed no arguments to oppoſe it; only, to make a diverſion, began to complain of her hard fate, as much as her bed-fellow did of her's; and thus cunningly engaged her to relate her adventures, the more eaſily, becauſe at that juncture the poor woman would not allow any body to be more unfortunate than herſelf. She therefore dried thoſe tears that trickled down her cheeks in abundance, and, fetching a deep ſigh, thus began to tell her ſtory. I was born a player; the daughter of one whom I never heard had any other relations but players. My mother was daughter to a merchant of Marſeilles, who had beſtowed her in

marriage on my father, as a recompence for venturing his life to defend him againſt a gally-officer (as much in love with my mother, as he was hated by her) who had attacked him to his diſadvantage. This was an extraordinary fortune to my father; for without being put to the trouble of ſuing and wooing, he married a wife, young, beautiful, and richer than a ſtroller could ever pretend to. His father-in-law endeavoured to perſuade him to leave his profeſſion, and betake himſelf to the buſineſs of a merchant, as the more profitable and creditable employment of the two. But my mother, who was a great lover of plays, hindered him from leaving the ſtage; though, to give him his due, he was inclined to follow his wife's father's advice, as one that knew much better than ſhe, that a player's life is not ſo happy as it appears to be. My father left Marſeilles ſoon after his marriage, and carried away my mother to make her firſt campaign, ſhe being more impatient than he; ſo that in a little time, he made her an excellent player. She proved with child the firſt year of their marriage, and was brought to bed of me behind the ſcenes: a year after I had a brother whom I loved dearly, and

by whom I was much beloved. Our company was made up of our family, and three other players, one of which had a wife who acted under parts. Upon a holiday, going through a ſmall town in Perigord, my mother, the other player and I on the cart that carried our baggage, and our men on foot to guard us, our little caravan was on the ſudden attacked by ſeven or eight ugly fellows, ſo very drunk, that meaning only to fright us with ſhooting off a gun, I felt their ſhot all over me, and my mother received a dangerous wound in the arm. They ſeized my father and two of his companions, before they were in a poſture to defend themſelves, and beat them unmercifully. My brother, and the youngeſt of our men fled away, and ever ſince I could never hear of my brother. The inhabitants of the town joined with thoſe that had offered us this outrageous violence, and cauſed our cart to go back. This eager mob ran fiercely, like people who have got a great booty, and are willing to ſecure it, and made ſuch a noiſe that they did not hear one another ſpeak. After an hour's march, they carried us into a caſtle, which we had no ſooner entered, but we heard ſeveral

people

people cry out with great joy, that the gipſies were taken; whereby, we found their miſtake, which gave us not a little comfort. The mare that drew our cart fell down dead with fatigue, having been hard put to it, and ſoundly beaten. The perſon to whom the mare belonged, and of whom the company had hired her, fell a roaring after as lamentable a manner as if her huſband had been dying: at the ſame time my mother felt ſuch a violent pain in her arm, that ſhe fainted away, while my cries drowned thoſe that were exerted upon account of the mare. The noiſe we made, together with the hallooing of the rude rabble, and of the drunken fellows who brought us thither, cauſed the lord of the caſtle to come out of a parlour, attended by four or five ill-looking men in red cloaths. His firſt queſtion was, Where, where are the thieving gipſies? Which put us in a terrible fright; but ſeeing none but fair faces among us, he then aſked my father who he was; and had no ſooner heard that we were a wretched company of players, but with an impetuous paſſion, at which we all wondered, and ſwearing after as furious a manner as ever I heard a man, he charged with his ſword thoſe that had

ſeized us, and cauſed them to diſappear in a moment, ſome wounded, and the reſt in a terrible fright. The mob being thus diſpers'd, he commanded my father and his companions to be unbound, the women to be carried into a room, and our goods to be laid up ſafe. Some chamber-maids came to wait upon us, and got a bed ready for my mother, who found herſelf very ill of the wound in her arm. Soon after, a man that looked like a ſteward, came to expreſs his maſter's concern for the rude uſage we had received. He told us, that the ſcoundrels who had made ſo unlucky a miſtake, ſneaked away, moſt of them ſoundly beaten, or lame, and that a ſurgeon had been ſent for from the next town to dreſs my mother's arm; afterwards he aſked us very earneſtly, whether they had taken any thing from us, and adviſed us to view our goods, and ſee if there was any thing wanting. At night they brought us our ſupper into our room; the ſurgeon came, my mother's wound was dreſſed, and ſhe went to bed in a violent fever. The next day the lord of the caſtle ſent for the players, enquired of them how my mother did, and told them he would not ſuffer her to go out of his houſe before

ſhe was perfectly recovered. He was ſo obliging as to ſend men up and down the country to enquire after my brother and the young player with whom he fled away, but they could not be found; which misfortune increaſed my mother's diſtemper. A phyſician and a ſurgeon (more ſkilful than he who dreſſed her wound firſt) were ſent for from a neighbouring town, and in a ſhort time our good uſage in the caſtle made us forget the violence we had ſuffered. The lord at whoſe houſe we were entertained, was a very rich man, more feared than loved through all the country; as violent in all his actions as a governor of a frontier town, and one who had the reputation of being as brave as Hercules. His name was the baron de Sigognac: at this preſent he can be no leſs than a marquis, but in thoſe days he was only a petty tyrant of Perigord. A company of gipſies who had lain in his lordſhip's barn, ſtole away ſome horſes out of a park where he kept mares for breed, at a league diſtance from his caſtle; and the men that were ſent to purſue them, miſtook us for them, to our coſt. My mother being now perfectly well, my father and his companions, to expreſs their gratitude for

their kind entertainment, as far as poor ſtrollers were able, offered to act in the caſtle as long as the baron de Sigognac ſhould deſire it. An over-grown page, at leaſt four and twenty years old, who was undoubtedly the maſter of all the pages in the kingdom, and a ſort of gentleman-waiter, ſtudied the parts of my brother, and of the player with whom he ran away. And now buſy fame proclaimed through all the country, that a company of ſtrollers were to act a play at the baron de Sigognac's: abundance of Perigordine gentry were invited to the ſhow; and when the page was perfect in his part, which he found ſo difficult to learn, that they were obliged to cut and reduce it to two lines, we acted Garne's Roger and Bradamante. The aſſembly was very fine, the room well lighted, the ſtage convenient, and the ſcenes adapted to the ſubject. We all endeavoured to do our beſt, and we acted with general applauſe. My mother, in the habit of an Amazon, appeared as beautiful as an angel; and, though her late indiſpoſition made her look a little pale, yet the brightneſs of her complexion obſcured all the lights in the room. Though I have great reaſon to be very melancholly, yet cannot

not I forbear laughing whenever I think how ridiculouſly the page acted his part; neither muſt my ill humour rob you of this pleaſing paſſage: perhaps you may not find it ſuch; but I can aſſure you, it made all the company laugh heartily, and I have laughed at it an hundred times ſince; but whether it was laughable, or becauſe I am one of thoſe who laugh at a very ſmall matter, I ſhan't pretend to determine. He acted the duke of Aymon's page, and had but two lines to ſpeak in all the play; when the old man reprimanded his daughter Bradamante for refuſing to marry the emperor's ſon, (becauſe ſhe was in love with Rogero) the page ſays to his maſter,

Come in, my lord, and let us leave the ſtreet,
I ſee you ſeem to totter on your F E E T.

Our page, however, though his part was eaſy enough to remember, yet murdered the ſecond verſe, and ſaid very aukwardly, and trembling like a malefactor,

Come in, my lord, and let us leave the ſtreet,
I ſee you ſeem to totter on your L E G S.

This falſe rhime ſurprized every body; he that acted Aymon's part burſt out a laughing, and was no longer able to re-

preſent an angry old man. All the audience laughed as well as he; and I myſelf, who was then peeping through the hangings to ſee and be ſeen, laughed alſo to ſuch a degree that I was ready to drop down. The maſter of the houſe, who was one of thoſe melancholy perſons who laugh but ſeldom, and never at a ſmall matter, found his page's want of memory and his aukward way of reciting verſes, ſo laughable a ſubject, that he endangered his burſting by endeavouring to preſerve his gravity; but at laſt he was obliged to laugh as well as the reſt; and his men have told us ſince, that they never knew him ſo well pleaſed in all their lives. Now, as he had great authority in that country, there was not one perſon of the whole audience but laughed as much as he, or perhaps more, out of complaiſance, or a natural inclination.

But I am afraid, leſt I have imitated thoſe who preface a tale with, I'll tell you a ſtory that will make you die with laughing; but ſeldom or ever are as good as their words: for I muſt confeſs I raiſed your expectation too high about the ſimplicity of my page. Not at all, anſwered Stella, I have found it ſuch as you made me expect it; it is true, the

thing

thing might have ſeemed more ridiculous to thoſe that ſaw it, than it will to ſuch as ſhall only hear it related; but the aukwardneſs of the poor page muſt have contributed much to the cauſe of your mirth; and, beſides, the time, the place, and the natural inclination we have to laugh for company's ſake, are all advantages it cannot have now. Cave made no farther apology, but reſumed her ſtory where ſhe had left off.

After, continued ſhe, that both the actors and the audience had laughed as much as their riſible faculties would give them leave, the baron de Sigognac ordered his page to come again on the ſtage, in order to mend his fault, or rather to make new ſport for the company: but the page (the greateſt looby ever I ſaw) refuſed to obey the poſitive commands of the ſevereſt maſter in the world. The baron took his denial as he was prompted by his haſty temper; that is to ſay, very ill; and his reſentment, which ought to have been ſmall, had he been ruled by reaſon, proved afterwards the fatal cauſe of the greateſt misfortune that could befall us. Our tragedy was honoured with the applauſe of the whole audience; and the farce was

ſtill better received than the tragedy; as generally happens every where except in Paris. The baron de Sigognac, and the reſt of the gentlemen his neighbours, were ſo well pleaſed with it, that they deſired to ſee us act again. All the gentlemen clubbed to make a preſent to our company, every one according to his generoſity; the baron ſhewed them the way, and the play was given out for the next holiday. We played a whole month before theſe Perigordine gentry; during which time we were treated and careſſed both by men and women; and beſides, our company was preſented with ſome change of cloaths in very tolerable condition. The baron entertained us at his own table; his ſervants were extremely officious in waiting upon us, and often told us how much they were obliged to us for their maſter's good humour, whom they found quite altered ſince plays had civilized his rough manners. The page alone looked upon us as people that had blaſted his reputation for ever; and the line he had ſpoiled, and which every body in the houſe, even to the very ſcullion, repeated to him often in raillery, was a cruel ſtab to him, for which he at laſt reſolved to be revenged upon ſome one or other of our company. Upon

Upon a certain day, when the baron de Sigognac had aſſembled his neighbours and tenants, to rid his woods of a great number of wolves that harboured there, and by which the country was very much annoyed; my father and his fellow-ſtrollers accompanied him each with a gun, as did alſo his ſervants. The unlucky page went along with them, and having found the opportunity he looked for, to put his ill deſign againſt us in execution, he no ſooner eſpied my father and his comrades ſeparated from the reſt, and giving one another powder and ſhot to load their guns, but he preſented his piece at them from behind a tree, and ſhot my unhappy father with two bullets: his comrades were ſo buſy in ſupporting him, that they never thought at firſt to purſue the murderer, who fled from his ſervice and country two days after, on hearing that my father was dead of his wounds. My mother grieved at her loſs to ſuch a degree, that it almoſt broke her heart; ſhe fell ſick again, and I was as much afflicted as it was poſſible for a girl of my years. My mother's illneſs proving a lingering diſeaſe, the men and women that belonged to our company, took their leaves of the baron de Sigognac, and

and went to ſeek their fortune with ſome other ſtrollers. My mother lay ſick for above two months, but at laſt recovered; having, during that time, received ſuch tokens of generoſity and kindneſs from the baron de Sigognac, as were little to be expected from a man who was ſtigmatized for being the greateſt tyrant that ever made himſelf feared in a country where each arbitrary fool of fortune preſumes to domineer. His ſervants, who never found any humanity or civility in him before, wondered to ſee him converſe with us, after the moſt kind and obliging manner in the world. One might have thought he was in love with my mother, but that he ſeldom ſpoke to her, and never came into our room (where we uſed to take our meals) after my father's death, and only ſent often to know how ſhe did: however, the country people talking as if my mother had indulged him in too many familiarities, ſhe, at length, conſidered it as incompatible with decency to ſtay any longer in the houſe of a perſon of his quality, and reſolved upon leaving it and retiring to her father's at Marſeilles. She therefore acquainted the baron with her intentions; returned him thanks for all his kind uſage to us, and

deſired

deſired him to add one favour more to thoſe we had already received; which was, to lend us ſaddle-horſes for herſelf and me, till we came to a certain town; and a cart to carry our little baggage, which ſhe deſigned to ſell to the firſt man that would give her any thing for it. The baron was much ſurprized at my mother's requeſt; nor was ſhe in a leſs ſurpriſe than he, on finding he would neither grant or deny it.

The next day the curate of one of the churches within his lordſhip's preſentation, came to viſit us in our chamber, accompanied by his niece, a good-natured and agreeable girl, with whom I was intimately acquainted. While we were walking in the garden of the caſtle, her uncle was alone with my mother: the curate had a long converſation with her, and did not leave her till ſupper-time. When I came back, I found my mother melancholly and full of thought; I aſked her three or four times what was the matter; but could get no anſwer from her, only ſhe fell a weeping, and ſo I wept for company, without knowing why I did ſo. At laſt ſhe bid me ſhut the chamber-door, and then told me (weeping ſtill more than before) that the curate had

had informed her, that the baron de Sigognac was deſperately in love with her, and aſſured her beſides, that he had ſo great a reſpect for her, that he never durſt declare (either by himſelf or others) his paſſion for her, without offering her marriage at the ſame time. Here ſhe ſtopped, being almoſt ſuffocated with ſighs and ſobs: I aſked her once again, Wat ail'd her? What! daughter, ſaid ſhe to me, have I not ſaid enough to let you underſtand that I am the moſt wretched woman in the world? I told her I did not think it ſo great a misfortune for a player to become a lady of quality. Alas! dear child, ſaid ſhe, you talk like a young girl that knows nothing of the world. What (added ſhe) if he ſhould deceive the curate in order to deceive me? If he does not deſign to marry me, as he would perſuade me he does, have I not reaſon to fear all manner of violence, from a man ſo much a ſlave to his paſſions? And if he really deſigns to marry me, and I conſent to it, what woman in the world can be more miſerable than myſelf when his beſtial paſſion is once palled? How great is his hatred like to prove, if ever he ſhould repent loving me? No, no, daughter continued ſhe, fortune is

not

not ſo favourable as thou imagineſt: nay, rather, ſhe deſigns to aggravate my load of woe; for after having deprived me of a huſband whom I loved, and by whom I was beloved, ſhe now would force one upon me, who perhaps will hate me, and oblige me to hate him too. Her grief, which I thought unreaſonable, increaſed to ſuch degree, that ſhe was like to be ſtifled with it, whilſt I helped her to undreſs herſelf. I comforted her as well as I could, and endeavoured to abate her affliction, with all the arguments a girl of my years was able to frame; not forgetting to tell her, that the obliging and reſpectful behaviour which the rougheſt of all men had ever ſhewn in converſing with us, ſeemed to be a good omen; eſpecially that of his want of aſſurance in diſcovering his paſſion to a woman, whoſe profeſſion is rather apt to embolden a man in his addreſſes, than inſpire him with awful reſpect. My mother ſuffered me to ſpeak all I thought fit, and went to bed very much afflicted, but cheriſhed her grief all night long, inſtead of ſleeping. I alſo endeavoured, for the ſake of good manners, to reſiſt ſleep; but at laſt was obliged to yield to the pleaſing aſſuager of ſorrow. My mother got up early

early in the morning, and when I awaked I found her already dreſſed, and tolerably well compoſed. I was in great pain to know what reſolution ſhe had taken; for, to tell you truth, I flattered myſelf with my mother's future greatneſs, in caſe the baron was ſincere and honourable in his addreſſes, and my mother willing to grant his ſuit. The thoughts of hearing my mother called my lady baroneſs, filled my mind with delight, and ambition began to inflame my youthful breaſt.

Mrs. Cave was thus recounting her ſtory, and Stella liſtening to her with great attention, when they heard ſomebody tread in their chamber; which ſtartled them the more, as they remembered to have faſtened the door with the bolt. The noiſe continued, and Cave demanded Who is there? No anſwer was made; but a moment after, Cave ſaw at the bed's-feet (the curtains being open) the figure of a perſon whom ſhe heard ſigh, and who, leaning on the bed, reſted on her feet. She ſat up, to view the thing nearer which had frightened her; and being fully reſolved to ſpeak to it, ſhe reached her head out of the bed; on which it immediately diſappeared. Though company often creates courage, yet ſometimes

our

our fears are not decreaſed by being ſhared with another. Cave was frightened becauſe ſhe had ſeen nothing, and Stella becauſe ſhe ſaw her companion afraid. They both thruſt themſelves into the bed, covered their heads with the bed-cloaths, and lay cloſe, not daring almoſt to ſpeak to each other for fear. At laſt Cave told Stella, that her poor daughter muſt be dead, and that it was her ghoſt which came to ſigh by her. Stella was, perhaps, going to reply, when they heard the thing walk again in the room; ſo ſhe prudently changed her deſign, and thruſt herſelf deeper into the bed than ſhe had done before; but Cave, emboldened by the thought that it was her daughter's ghoſt, ſat up again in the bed, and ſeeing the ſame thing appear, ſighing as before, and leaning on her feet, reached out her hand and felt a very rough one; which occaſioned her hideouſly to ſhriek, and tumble down with the fright. At the ſame time they heard a barking in the room, as when a dog is afraid of any thing that he meets in the night. Cave recovered once more, took courage enough to look at it, and then ſaw a great greyhound that barked at her. She threatened him with a loud voice, at which he retired

retired barking towards the corner of the room, where he vaniſhed out of ſight. The courageous actreſs roſe out of her bed, and by the moon-ſhine which came through the window, diſcovered in that corner of the room, where the phantom and the greyhound had diſappeared, a little door which opened unto a little pair of back-ſtairs. By that ſhe eaſily imagined that a grey-hound belonging to the houſe had crept through the door into their room; and that having a mind to lay himſelf on their bed, but not daring to do it without the conſent of thoſe who were in it, he had ſighed like a dog; and the bed being high, as are all old beds, he had leaned his fore legs on her feet, and afterwards crept under the bed, when Cave firſt reached her hand out of it: however, the belief of a ghoſt being in the room, had ſo poſſeſſed Stella's imagination that it was a long time before ſhe could perſuade her there was nothing but a grey-hound. As afflicted as Cave was, ſhe ridiculed her companion about her cowardice, and reſerved the continuation of her ſtory to another time, when they ſhould not want ſleep ſo much as they did then. It was now break of day, they again fell aſleep, and got up about ten;

ten; when word was brought them, that the coach which was to carry them to Mans was ready to ſet out as ſoon as they pleaſed.

CHAP. XXVII.

Deſtiny meets with Leander.

DESTINY in the mean time went from town to town, ſtill enquiring after thoſe he purſued, but could learn no news nor tidings of them. Thus he rambled up and down till two or three o'clock in the afternoon, when hunger and his horſe's wearineſs obliged him to return to the great village which he had left a while before. Here he found a pretty good inn, becauſe it ſtood upon the road, and where he did not forget to aſk whether they had heard of a company of horſemen who ſtole a young woman. There is a gentleman above who can give you an account of them, ſaid the ſurgeon of that village, who happened to be there; for, added he, I believe he has been a quarrelling with them, and has got many a wound for his pains. I juſt now applied to him an anodyne and reſolutive

reſolutive cataplaſm on a livid tumour he has on the vertebræ of the neck, and dreſt a great cut he received in the occiput. I would have let him blood, becauſe he is full of contuſions, but he would not let me though he has great occaſion for it. He muſt needs have got a heavy fall, or elſe have been beaten unmercifully. This country ſurgeon took ſuch delight in muſtering the learned terms of his art, that though Deſtiny was gone from him, and nobody left to give him the hearing, yet went he ſtill on with his diſcourſe till he was fetched away to bleed a woman, who was dying of an apoplexy.

In the mean time Deſtiny went up to the perſon's chamber of whom the ſurgeon had ſpoke, where he found a young man well dreſſed, with his head bound, and lying upon a bed to take his reſt. He was meditating a compliment to excuſe his intruding into his chamber, before he knew whether he was willing to admit of his viſit; but was not a little ſurprized when, at the firſt words he ſpoke, the other roſe from his bed, and ran to embrace him, diſcovering himſelf to be his ſervant Leander, who was gone from him without taking leave, four or five days before, and whom Cave had ſuſpected to

be

be the raviſher of her daughter. Deſtiny was now at a ſtand, not knowing in what ſort of tone to accoſt him, becauſe of his reſemblance to a gentleman, both in perſon and dreſs. Whilſt he was thus viewing him, Leander had time to compoſe himſelf, for he ſeemed ſomething diſordered at firſt: I am aſhamed (ſaid he to Deſtiny) I dealt not ſo frankly and ſincerely with you, as I ſhould have done with one whom I value ſo much; but you muſt excuſe an unexperienced young man, who, before he was well acquainted with you, thought you to be of the ſame make, as thoſe of your profeſſion generally are; and who therefore did not dare to entruſt you with a ſecret, on which depended the happineſs of his life. Deſtiny told him, he could not imagine in what particular he had diſturbed him, ſo deſired he would let him know it. I have a great many things beſides to tell you, if you are not already acquainted with them, anſwered Leander; but firſt of all let me know what brought you hither. Deſtiny told him how Angelica had been ſtolen; that he had purſued her raviſhers; and was informed as he came into the inn, that he met with one in him, who could give an account of them. It is true I met with them, replied

Leander

Leander with a ſigh, and I did as much againſt them, as a ſingle man could do againſt many; but my ſword happening to break in the body of the firſt man I wounded, I could neither reſcue Mrs. Angelica, nor die in her defence, though I was fully reſolved to do one. They left me in the condition you ſee me; and, thinking they had killed me with a back ſtroke they gave me on the head, (but which, however, only ſtunned me for a while) they went on their way in great haſte. This is all I know of Mrs. Angelica, but we ſhall hear more anon from a ſervant of mine, who is to meet me here, and whom I ſent to follow them at a diſtance, after he had helped me to mount my horſe, which they left me, becauſe, I ſuppoſe, they did not think him worth ſtealing. Deſtiny aſked him, why he went from him without giving him warning, from whence he came, and who he was; not doubting but that he concealed his name and condition from him. Leander confeſſed there was reaſon for his ſuſpicion; and having laid himſelf down, becauſe the blows he had received tortured him moſt painfully, whilſt Deſtiny ſat at the bed's-feet, Leander recounted to him what you may read in the following chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The hiſtory of Leander.

I AM the ſon of a gentleman very well known in the province where I was born, and hope one day to be worth at leaſt four thouſand crowns a year, provided my father be at laſt pleaſed to die; for though it is now fourſcore years ſince he has plagued all thoſe who have any dependence on him, yet he is ſo well in health that I have more reaſon to fear he will never die, than to hope I ſhall inherit three fine lordſhips, which make up his eſtate. He deſigned to make me a counſellor in the parliament of Brittany, though againſt my inclination, and for that purpoſe ſent me to ſchool betimes. I was at the college of La Fleche when your company came to act there; there I ſaw Mrs. Angelica, and was inſpired with ſuch a paſſion for her, that I could attend to nothing elſe. Nay, I went farther; for I had the aſſurance to inform her of my love, at which ſhe was not much offended; I writ to her, ſhe received my letter, and did not look more coldly upon me the next time I ſaw her

than before. After this Mrs. Cave's illneſs confining her to her chamber, whilſt you were at La Fleche, her daughter and I had frequent opportunities of converſing, which her mother would have prevented had ſhe been well; for you know how ſevere and reſerved ſhe is for a woman of her profeſſion, which ſeems to diſpenſe with its followers not being over nice or ſcrupulous. From the firſt moment I fell in love, I never went to ſchool more, nor miſſed a play. The Jeſuits endeavoured to bring me back to my duty; but having choſen the moſt charming miſtreſs in the world, I refuſed to obey the moſt troubleſome maſters in the univerſe. Your ſervant, you may remember, was killed at the play-houſe door, by the ſcholars of Brittany, who made that year a great diſturbance at La Fleche, becauſe they were very numerous, and wine happened to be cheap; which was in ſome meaſure the reaſon why you went from La Fleche to Angiers. I did not, however, take my leave of Angelica, becauſe her mother was always with her; all I could do, was to appear before her as ſhe went away, with deſpair in my face, and tears in my eyes. A pitying melancholly look which ſhe caſt

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on me, was like to break my heart; I locked myſelf up in my room, wept bitterly the remaining part of the day, and all the night; but the very next morning, changing cloaths with my man, (who was about my ſize) I left him at La Fleche to ſell my ſchool-boys equipage, and gave him a letter for a tenant of my father's, who ſupplies me with money whenever I aſk for it, with orders to come to me at Angiers.

I began my journey thither after you, and overtook you at Duretail, where ſeveral gentlemen, who were then hunting a ſtag, obliged you to ſtay ſeven or eight days. There I offered my ſervice to you, and you entertained me as your man, either becauſe you were loth to be without me, or becauſe my face and mien, which you ſeemed to like, had engaged you to hire me. My hair, which I had cut very ſhort, hindered me from being known again by thoſe who had often ſeen me with Angelica: beſides, my ſervant's old coat, which I had put on to diſguiſe myſelf, made me look like quite different from what I appeared to be when dreſſed in my own cloaths, which were finer than a ſchool-boy's generally are. However, my miſtreſs Angelica knew me at firſt

ſight, and has owned to me ſince, that ſhe did not doubt, but my paſſion was very violent for her, ſince I could abandon all to follow her. She had the generoſity to diſſuade me from it; adviſed me to recall my wandering reaſon, and inflicted ſuch rigours as would be ſufficient to cool a man leſs amorous than myſelf; but by my conſtant love, I inſenſibly engaged her to love me as much as I did her: and, as you had the ſoul of a man of quality, (of ſuch a one I mean as is truly noble) it was not long before you found out that I was not of the temper of a ſervant; I ſoon gained your favour, and the eſteem of all the gentlemen of your company; nay, even Rancour did not hate me, though he had the character of loving nobody.

I ſhall not waſte my time in relating all the fine things which two perſons equally in love might ſay to one another, as often as they happened to come together; you know that ſufficiently from your own experience. I will only tell you, that Mrs. Cave ſuſpecting our private correſpondence, or rather, having certain proofs of it, charged her daughter never to ſpeak to me more. Angelica, however, did not obey her; but her mother having ſurprized

prized her while writing to me, uſed her ſo roughly, both in public and private, that I afterwards found no great difficulty in acquiring her conſent to be carried off. I am not afraid to make this plain confeſſion to you, becauſe I know you to be as generous as any man, and at leaſt as amorous as myſelf. Deſtiny bluſhed at theſe words of Leander; who went on with his diſcourſe, and told him, that he had left the company in order to put his deſign in execution; that one of his father's tenants had promiſed to furniſh him with a ſum of money, and that he hoped to receive more at St. Malos, from a merchant's ſon, his intimate friend, who was lately come to his eſtate, by the death of his parents. He added, that, by the aſſiſtance of his friend, he did not doubt of a poſſibility to get over into England, and from thence of making peace with his father, without expoſing to his anger Angelica or her mother, whom, in all probability, he would otherwiſe proſecute, with all the advantage that a man of wealth and quality could have over two poor players.

Deſtiny made Leander ſenſible, that, becauſe of his youth and quality, his father would certainly have indicted Mrs.

Cave for a rape, in caſe he had not thought of this way to prevent it. He did not endeavour to make him forget his miſtreſs; for he was ſenſible, that perſons in love, were not capable of following any counſel but what was ſuggeſted by their paſſion; and, in a word, are more to be pitied than blamed; but he highly diſapproved his deſign of going over into England; and repreſented to him, what people might think of two young ſtrangers in a foreign country; the hazards and fatigues of a ſea-voyage; the difficulty of being ſupplied with money, in caſe he ſhould want; and, laſtly, the attempts to which they would be expoſed by Angelica's beauty and his own inexperience. Leander did not endeavour to defend a bad cauſe: he once more aſked Deſtiny's pardon, for having concealed himſelf ſo long; and Deſtiny, in return, promiſed to uſe all his intereſt with Mrs. Cave, in recommending him to her favour. Moreover, Deſtiny told him, that if he was fully reſolved never to marry any woman but Angelica, he ought not to leave their company; adding, that, in the mean time, his father might die, or his paſſion abate, or, perhaps, be quite extinguiſhed—Oh! never, never, cried Leander.

Leander. Well then, ſaid Deſtiny, to ſecure your miſtreſs's heart, your beſt way is never to loſe ſight of her: be a player ſtill with us, for you are not the only man that treads the ſtage, when he could follow a better employment: write to your father; make him believe you are in the army, and try to get money from him; in the mean time I will converſe with you, as if you were my own brother, and by that means endeavour to make you forget the indifferent uſage you received from me, whilſt I was unacquainted with your quality and merit.

Leander would have thrown himſelf at his feet, if the violent pain he felt all over his body, upon account of his bruiſes, would have given him leave: however, he returned him thanks after ſo obliging a manner, and made him ſuch hearty proteſtations of friendſhip, that from that very moment he had as great an eſteem for him as one gentleman could poſſibly have for another. They diſcourſed afterwards which way they ſhould go in ſearch of Angelica; but a great noiſe interrupted their converſation, and cauſed Deſtiny to run down into the kitchen, where was tranſacting what you ſhall hear in the next chapter.

CHAP. XXIX.

A bloody fight; The death of the inn-keeper, and other memorable occurrences.

TWO men, one of which was in black like a country ſchool-maſter, and the other in grey, who looked like a catch-pole, had laid hold one of another by the hair and beard, and now and then interrupted their execrations with blows. Both were indeed what their habits and looks ſhewed them. He in black, the ſchool-maſter of the town, was brother to the curate; the other, in grey, was a bailiff of the ſame town, and brother to the inn-keeper. This inn-keeper was then in a chamber next the kitchen, ready to give up the ghoſt, being ſick of a violent fever, which had ſo diſordered his ſenſes, that he broke his head againſt the wall; and the wound aiding his diſtemper, had brought him ſo low, that, when his frenzy left him, he was compelled to part with life; which, perhaps, he regretted leſs than his ill-gotten money. For a long time he had been a ſoldier, and was at laſt come home laden with

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years, and ſo extremely light of honeſty, that he might be ſaid to have leſs of it than money; although he was very poor. But becauſe women are very often catched by thoſe very things which they ought the leaſt to be enamoured with, his twiſted hair, longer than any peaſant's in town, his curſing and ſwearing like a true ſon of Mars, a briſtling feather which he wore on his hat upon holidays, when the weather was fair, and a ruſty long ſword that flapped againſt the old boots he had on, although he never beſtrode a horſe; all theſe, I ſay, gained him the heart of an old woman that kept an inn. She had been courted by the richeſt tenants in the country, not ſo much on account of her beauty, as becauſe ſhe had got an eſtate with her firſt huſband, by exacting upon people, and cheating in the meaſure both of wine and oats; yet ſhe courageouſly reſiſted all the aſſaults of her lovers, till, at laſt, this old weather-beaten ſoldier triumphed over his hoſteſs. This tavern-nymph had the leaſt face, and the biggeſt belly of any woman in Mayne, though that province is remarkable for abounding in big-bellied people, and fat capons; which leaving naturaliſts to account

count for, let us return to this ſhort big woman, whom I fancy before me as often as I think on her. She married our warrior without conſulting her relations; and having lived to a crazy old age, and undergone great hardſhips with him, had, at laſt, the ſatisfaction to ſee him die of a broken ſkull, which ſhe looked upon as a juſt judgment for his repeated attempts to break her's.

When Deſtiny came into the kitchen, the hoſteſs and her maid were helping the old curate of the town to part the combatants, who had grappled one another like two ſhips in a ſea-fight; but the threats of Deſtiny, and his magiſterial way of ſpeaking, brought about a truce which the curate's exhortations could not before effect: whereupon, the two mortal enemies let go their hold, ſpitting half of their bloody teeth out of their mouths, bleeding at their noſes, and taring their hands full of each other's hair both from their heads and beards. The curate being an honeſt well-bred perſon, returned Deſtiny thanks very civily; and Deſtiny, to do him farther pleaſure, cauſed thoſe two very perſons to embrace in a friendly manner, who

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a moment before had endeavoured to ſtrangle one another. During this reconcilement, the inn keeper ended his obſcure life, without ſo much as giving notice of it to his friends; inſomuch, that when they entered his room after the concluſion of the peace, they found there was no more to be done than to bury him. The curate prayed over the dead body, and did it very well, for he was extremely expeditious. His vicar came to relieve him; and in the mean time the widow thought it proper to roar and cry, which ſhe did with a great deal of oſtentation and vanity. The brother of the deceaſed, either diſſembled being ſorrowful, or was ſo in reality; and the men and women ſervants performed their parts as well as he. The curate followed Deſtiny into his chamber, offering to ſerve him and Leander to the utmoſt of his power, and invited them to dine with him. Deſtiny, who had eaten nothing all that day, and uſed a great deal of exerciſe, fell to it with a greedy appetite; Leander fed more upon amorous thoughts than victuals; and the curate talked more than he eat. He told them a hundred pleaſant ſtories about the avarice of the deceaſed;

deceaſed; and acquainted them with the comical quarrels which this reigning paſſion had often cauſed him, both with his wife and his neighbours. Among the reſt, he related an account of a journey the deceaſed once made to Laval with his wife: the horſe that carried them both having loſt two of his ſhoes, the ſoldier left his wife holding it by the bridle, at the foot of a tree, while he went back as far as Laval, to look for his horſe's ſhoes; however, he loſt his labour whilſt his wife loſt her patience (for they were come two leagues from Laval) and really began to be in pain for his welfare, when ſhe eſpied him coming bare-foot, with his boots and hoſe in his hands. She was not a little ſurprized at this novelty, but did not dare to aſk the reaſon of it; for by imitating his officers in the wars, he made himſelf ſo abſolute at home, that ſhe did not preſume to contradict him, when he commanded her to pull off her ſtockings; or ſo much as aſked him why he did it; but thought it was out of devotion. He then cauſed his wife to lead his horſe by the bridle, whilſt he walked behind and drove him. Thus the man and wife, without either ſhoes

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or ſtockings, and the unſhod horſe, after a tedious and troubleſome march, came home at laſt, late at night, and all three very much tired. Indeed the inn-keeper and his wife were ſo galled and ſore in the feet, that they could not walk for almoſt a fortnight after. He never was more pleaſed with any thing he had ever done; and when ever he thought on't, told his wife laughing, that, if they had not come bare-foot from Laval, they had been at a great expence for ſhoes, both for themſelves and their horſe.

Deſtiny and Leander took not much notice of the ſtory, though the curate had promiſed a good one; but they either did not find it ſo pleaſant as he ſaid it was, or were not then in a humour to laugh. The curate, being a great talker, was not contented with this, but had ſtill a mind to proceed to another; and told Deſtiny, that what they had heard, was nothing in compariſon of what he had to tell them about the inn-keeper's preparing himſelf for death. It is now four or five days, continued he, ſince he knew he was paſt recovery; and yet he never was more ſparing: he grudged himſelf all the new-laid eggs he eat during his illneſs; had

had a mind to know to a farthing the charge of his burial, and even would have abated ſomething of my fees, when I received his confeſſion: in ſhort, to end as he bagan, two hours before he died, he ordered his wife, in my hearing, to bury him in an old ſheet, which he knew was ſomewhere about the houſe, and which had above a hundred holes in it. His wife repreſented to him how indecent a thing it would be for him to be buried in it; but he grew obſtinate, and would have no other. His wife could not find in her heart to conſent to it; and, becauſe ſhe ſaw him unable to beat her, maintained her opinion with more aſſurance than ſhe had ever done, though it muſt be acknowledged, not without breaking in upon that duty which an honeſt wife owes her huſband, whether he be kind or not. At laſt, ſhe aſked how he could pretend to appear in the vally of Jehoſaphat in that equipage, and in what pickle he thought he ſhould riſe from the dead? The ſick man fell into a paſſion at this, and ſwearing as he uſed to do when he was in health, Zounds, cried he, I never intend to riſe again. I had as much ado to forbear laughing, as to make him underſtand

ſtand that he had offended God by thus falling into a paſſion; and much more by what he had ſaid to his wife, which was a piece of profaneneſs and impiety. He made an act of contrition for it, though ſomewhat againſt the grain, but not without a promiſe on our ſide, that he ſhould be buried in no other ſheet than what he had pitched upon. My brother, who burſt out a laughing when he heard him ſo loudly and plainly renounce his reſurrection, could not forbear laughing ſtill, as often as it came into his mind; but this the brother of the deceaſed taking exceptions at, from words they advanced to blows; both equally ſturdy and paſſionate, they laid hold of one another, and, perhaps, would have been ſtill cuffing and fighting, if you had not parted them.

Thus the curate made an end of his relation; having all the while addreſſed himſelf to Deſtiny, becauſe Leander did not give him any attention. He then took his leave of the ſtrollers with repeated offers of ſervice; and Deſtiny endeavoured to adminiſter ſome drops of comfort to the afflicted Leander, and bid him hope for the beſt. As bruiſed as the poor youth was, he now and then looked out

out at the window to see if his man came, as if his looking would make him come the sooner. But when people wait with impatience for any body, the wisest are fools enough to look towards the place from whence they expect them; which reflection shall close this volume.

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